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What you Can do With a Point & Shoot

with Judy Townsend

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From the Editor

Summer is upon us. The waters have warmed up, and outside of a few thunderstorms, it is time to dust off that gear and get back in the water.

The Bubble Gals have been working hard to line up more club dives. Club dives give our photographers a time to dive together in a pristine dive with others of like mind and carefully buoyant atmosphere, which we all know is key to excellent photographs.

So, keep an eye on the Newsletter, the website & your emails for updates. Remember, your payment secures your spot!

Until next time!

Members in the News

CONTEST WINNERS!

Congratulations!

Christopher Guglielmo got FIRST PLACE in Ocean Views and his work is now on display at the Smithsonian! click below and go check out the winning images-simply fabulous.

http://www.divephotoguide.com/articles/ocean_views_underwater_photography_exhibit_at_smithsonian

TOGETHERNESS CATEGORY
Third: Amaury Cruz, Miami Beach, FL- Dolphins

I have to mention Laz since so many of us know him from Jim Abernathy’s

WIDE ANGLE NOVICE CATEGORY
Second Place: Lazaro Ruda, Lake Park, FL- Alligator Split Shot

MACRO/CLOSE-UP OPEN CATEGORY
First Place: Lazaro Ruda, Lake Park, FL- Seahorse Babies
For those of you who are new to the club, this is just a small sampling of the power of digital. You don’t have to be a Rockefeller to take awesome shots. For those of you who begged borrowed, sold your first born to own a housed underwater camera, well, you are in for a shocker. And her camera only weighs about 1 lb. So come- check it out!
A 200' wall, a 6’ long goliath grouper, a whale shark, turtles on almost every dive…what do all these things have in common? They were found on my recent adventure to La Isla de Cozumel!

Our group consisted of 12 intrepid travelers. Eight of us met at the Villa Serenidad, a 5 bedroom, 3-story villa on the south end of the island between the hotel Fiesta Americana and Chankunaab. It came complete with private pool, hot tub, ground floor dive gear storage area, washer/dryer and even our own rinse tank! We can’t forget the hammocks and refrigerator next to the pool, amazing snorkeling just a stones throw from the villa and Pariatas, a local beach side pirate bar about 100 yards from our front door. Could it get any better?

The other four in the group booked at Hotel Cozumel, about a 10 minute drive north towards town. The rooms were clean and spacious, the pool area large and inviting and the staff very friendly. Being that this hotel also caters to divers, Dive Paradise, our operator for the week, had an office on the property. A dock to catch the morning dive boat, rinse tank, drying racks and even lockers to store gear near the dock were included.

Sunday morning was the first dive. After a quick breakfast and short Jeep drive to the Hotel Cozumel, we stood on the dock and marveled at the gin-clear water as we waited for our boat to arrive. We looked down and saw our first glimpse of the brightly colored fish that filled the flat, calm ocean waters. While we live in South Florida, one of the diving capitals of the world, only on the most remarkable days in Key Largo have we seen clarity that can even remotely compare. Every day was exactly the same for the entire week!

We eagerly boarded our private dive boat. Our dive masters Gato (Spanish for “cat”, although we would refer to him as “scuba kitty” by the end of the week) and Victor greeted us with very genuine smiles. We each set up our gear, but that would be the last time we would do it ourselves. From here on out they would make sure that we never had to lift anything again.

The conversation was lively as we continued to remark at the amazing water. Even at cruising speeds we could identify coral heads and large fish as we gazed like children in wonderment at the world below. When asked where we wanted to go for the day, the decision was quick and unanimous – Palancar Caves followed by Chankunaab reef would be our first dives!

One by one we plunged into the warm, 84 degree water and looked down on the defined reef line we were about to explore. At about 80 feet we entered our first passage way and slowly kicked through in a single file. The walls varied from 6’ to 15’ wide with the ceiling as much as 20’ above. Every so often there would be a natural break in the roof line that allowed sunlight to give a gentle glow to light our path. We turned left and right to follow the maze and marveled at the many varieties of thick coral that covered the walls. Fish did not seem to care about horizontal or vertical as they posed for us to admire. Our minds were racing between seeing the rugged structure of the swim through walls, admiring the bright colors of the soft corals and grabbing a picture or video as we could, all while remembering basic buoyancy skills and the cardinal rule – “fins up…don’t kick the bottom!”

After a short swim we exited the tunnel at about 93’, staring straight down the massive wall that descended to depths of well over 2,000’. It was the closest we have come to a true feeling of flying! Time after time we entered and exited other passage ways as we worked our way up the reef. Each swim through was just as incredible as the last. The dive seemed to end so quickly, yet our dive time showed over 50 minutes. Once on the boat one word exclamations such as, “WOW”, “Unbelievable” and “Amazing” were enthusiastically repeated over and over.

Our next dive was on Chankunaab Reef, a colorful and seemingly untouched reef line about 50’ deep. We quickly found what appeared to be an unlimited quantity of marine life of all shapes, sizes and species that covered our field of vision. The fish, used to
seeing divers on a regular basis, seemed less than impressed at our presence. Queen angels, butterfly fish and even turtles all seemed much more relaxed around us which made for some very rare, up close photo opportunities.

The next morning was a repeat of the previous with 2 more dives just as amazing. Before we jumped in the water I told Gato I would give him an extra $20 if he could show me a good turtle. Just after we hit the bottom he pointed down to the 2 gray angels I was photographing. When I gave him the “OK” sign he again pointed down in a more forceful manner. After a closer look I saw that the 2 gray angels were not over a piece of coral, but rather over the shell of a large hawksbill turtle! I snapped picture after picture and then shot several minutes of video. All the time the turtle simply continued to eat, only looking up periodically to see if I was still there. After we surfaced I happily told Gato, “Well, I guess I owe you $20!”

Later that evening we were in for a treat…a night dive on the very same Paradise Reef we dove that morning. The water clarity was just as we had seen during the day. Even the weakest dive lights seemed to shine into eternity. Not long into the dive our first octopus came into sight...then another...then another. After seeing five good sized specimens I lost count; they seemed to be everywhere! I marveled as they changed both color and texture to blend into their background. Like the other creatures of the Cozumel waters, they were less interested in us and more interested in finding their late night meal. We returned to the villa about 10PM only to have to wake at 4AM the following morning. Why on earth would we do this to ourselves on a vacation you may ask? The answer is simple – to dive with a whale shark of course!

Or next morning started by catching the 5AM ferry to Playa Del Carman, a 2 ½ hour van ride over some very rough Mexican roads followed by a 45 minute boat ride to snorkel with the holy grail of all sharks! Whale sharks migrate near the island of Holbox (pronounced Holboch) between June and August each year. Lucky snorkelers are allowed to enter the water in groups of 2 with a dive guide to come literally face to face with the world’s largest fish. While ours was only a baby – about 17’ long – he was still much larger than any of us. He effortlessly moved his tail from side to side, propelling himself at a speed that only the fastest of us could maintain for a short distance.

During my last time in the water I handed my camera to a buddy and dove down about 10’ to be next to this awe-inspiring creature. There were no sounds, no crowds, no cameras – time seemed to stop. For a brief moment he and I were swimming side by side as equals. While it only lasted a few seconds, it is one of the rare memories that will be with me forever.

We ended our week on Gato’s favorite dive – Palancar Deep. The passageways were a bit longer, the coral even richer and the drop off on the wall even more pronounced. As we exited our last swim through, we turned to our left and saw a turtle balancing on the edge of the wall, calmly eating pieces of coral. Two gray angels
were circling, picking up the scraps he left behind. We paused to drink in every moment and burned the images in our minds. Interacting with nature 90° down on such a spectacular wall is an event few ever get to experience. The initial excitement we felt a week ago was now replaced with peace and serenity. This was truly the pinnacle of our dives for the week!

This is my 3rd straight year diving in Cozumel. In 2005 Hurricane Wilma certainly did some damage to both dry land as well as the reefs deep beneath the sea. Each year I have seen more fish return and the reefs continue to regain their color and growth. These dives were the best I have seen here and some of the best I have seen in the Caribbean. Many say Cozumel remains one of the great dive destinations in the world. By my own experience this week, I definitely agree!

The Details….

Airfare: est $350-$400 RT (Continental from Ft Lauderdale via Houston)

Lodging: Villa Serenidad through Kelly Mattheis cozumelrocks@gmail.com  
http://rentalo.com/38609/villaserenidad.html  

What to Expect in Dives:
Dramatic walls, numerous swim throughs, crystal clear water, abundant fish life, great service from dive crews

Boats range from fast 6 packs to larger that carry up to 14

Total Dives during Week: 10 day, 1 night plus whale shark snorkel

Must Dive Reefs: Palancar Caves / Deep  
Santa Rosa Wall  
Paradise Reef  
Chankunaab Reef  
Yucab Reef

Must Do Other: Whale Sharks! (June – Aug)

Must Have Food: Ernesto’s Fajitas (world’s best chicken fajitas!)  
Las Tortugas (where the locals eat)

Great Places During the Day: Mezcalito’s  
Reggie Bar  
Coconuts

Locals Activity: Sunday night at town square  
- Live salsa music and party atmosphere
Photo CONTESTS

Jul 20  Deadline National Wildlife  National Wildlife® is accepting entries to our 39th annual contest. Winning photographs will be published online and a selection will appear in the December 2009 issue of the magazine. visit www.nwf.org/photozone.

Aug 24  National Geographic Traveler  
PDN / National Geographic Traveler World In Focus  
http://www.worldinfocuscontest.com/

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Aug 26  1ST INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION OF UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY from NATIONAL CENTRE OF DIVING PHOTOGRAPHY  
Underwater Photography National Center for Research and Technology, address: 81 French Republic - PC 653 02 - Kavala, by 26-8-2009 (postmarked). Competition and the application form will be posted on websites www.kavala.gr or www.teikav.edu.gr or www.thassos.gr 9) For further information contact: DimPanaretos@gmail.com or ioannis_stamatiadis@yahoo.gr

Aug 27  Ocean in Focus Conservation Photography Contest 2009  
http://www.marinephotobank.org/resources/OceaninFocusPhotoContestHome2009.php  
Check this one out. Marine Photo Bank is an agency that collects amazing images of marine abuse. Amazing images.

Aug 31  SUBIOS 2009  
This is a great contest as only 2 images per person are allowed. Images must be sent by mail on a CD, and payment is in Euros- see website for full details. The minimum image size for contest entries is 1024 x 768 pixels. Images should be submitted in JPEG format. Contest entries may be submitted on a CD  
Marketing, Events & Incentive  
Seychelles Tourism Board (STB)  
P O. Box 1262, Victoria  
Mahé Seychelles

Sep 18  LAUPS 47th Annual International Photography Competition Visit our website http://laups.org/comp_2009/ for competition guidelines, rules and entry form
FUTURE INTRA-CLUB CONTESTS

JULY
M - Red Algae
C - Sea Grass

AUGUST
M - Teeth
C - Weapons

SEPTEMBER
M - Reflections
C - Beneath the Sun

OCTOBER
M - Haunted Castles
C - Ghoulies

NOVEMBER
M - Fall Colors
C - Lionfish

WINNERS of the INTRA CLUB CONTEST JUNE:
CHALLENGERS: Herbivores

1st Place: Shen Collazo
2nd Place: Bill Cook
3rd Place: Shen Collazo
WINNERS of the INTRA CLUB CONTEST June:

MASTERS: Predators

1st Place: Steve Kovacs

2nd Place: Steve Kovacs

3rd Place: Sharon Baron

4th Place: Patrice Marker

5th Place: Rob Myers
2009 PHOTO CONTEST RULES

Digital Files:
Realizing that some computer adjustments are necessary for digital files, we ask that only minor adjustments be made in the computer. Only minor cropping, color adjustments, backscatter removal and sharpening are allowed. No extreme computer manipulation, removing items or adding items to the image.
• Images will be submitted prior to the meeting so that they can be compiled for easy viewing and judging.
• Image size should be no greater than 1024 pixels on the long side and the file size should be less than 1.4 megabytes. Images should be submitted in JPEG format.
• Each image file name must include your name, month, category, and number. Use “mastr” for Masters Category and “chall” for Challengers category. For example an image submitted by John Doe for the January Challengers contest would be named: JDoe-JanChall-1.jpeg
• Entries must sent via email to Bob Weybrecht at audiovisual@sfups.org the Friday night before the Monthly meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Red Algae – any algae of the Phylum Rhodophyta (e.g. crustose corallines, and a huge variety of red to purple or brownish delicate lacy to fleshy seaweeds – mostly small).</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Seagrass – image must feature seagrass or a seagrass bed as the dominate subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Teeth - images must show teeth.</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Weapons – any structure used for offense or defense other than teeth (e.g. sea urchin spines, mantis shrimp raptorial appendage, crab “claws”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Reflections – image must include a reflection of the primary subject.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Beneath the sun – image must contain a sunball, shafts, or rays of sunlight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Haunted castles – reef or wreck scene with a spooky ambience.</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Goulies – any animal that looks ghoulish or frightening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Fall colors – must include a substantial amount of orange or red.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Turkeyfish aka Lionfish: any fish of the subfamily Pteroinae.</td>
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TBA: On-the-day contest; digital creations.

*If you are uncertain about what qualifies as an animal or plant category, please consult a reputable guidebook such as Humann/deLoach’s Reef Set. If still in doubt, contact Rob Myers or Mike Schmale well before the contest. They will be happy to clarify this or look at a potential submission to confirm if it fits the category.
Coral Spawn - Key Largo, FL

The Bubble Gals are still working with the scientists to try and nail down the best possible dates.

Keep an eye on your email for updates.

Upcoming Dives To Be announced...

THE CLASSIFIED’S

EOS 10D body- $150.00.
EOS 3 body with battery grip- $125.00.
Elan 7 body with battery grip and Ikelite u/w housing, no port- $125.00.
Epson 2200 photo printer- $100.00.
Nikonos 20mm lens with viewfinder- $100.00.
Canon 500mm f4.5 lens, broken collar, part no longer available new. Lens can be used on a bean bag.- $500.00.
Spyder calibration device for CRT monitors, not for LCD monitors- $25.00.
Mike Ewanus
954-322-6629
mikeewanus@aol.com
© Kurt Kilfoyle

South Florida Underwater Photography Society
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

SFUPS is a Non-Profit Organization promoting interest in Underwater Photography. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month (January - November) at 7:30 p.m. at the El Palacio Hotel (formerly Holiday Inn- Pro Player), 21485 N.W. 27th Avenue, Miami

Annual Dues are $35.00 (individual), $45.00 (family) and $20.00 for “Out of Area” non-participating members. Dues are payable each January. After June 1st, dues are prorated to 1/2 of the above rates for new members only.

A Membership form must be filled out, signed and returned along with payment, a copy of your C-card and dive insurance. Make checks payable to SFUPS and send to: 359 Cottonwood Lane, Boca Raton, FL 33487.
Membership forms can be found on our website at www.sfups.org and will also be available at the meetings.