Meeting Schedule

February 9
March 9
April 13
May 11
June 8
July 13
August 10
September 14
October 12
November 9
December 14

7:30 PM at
El Palacio
(formerly the Holiday Inn)
21485 N.W. 27th Avenue, Miami
305-621-5801

Cover Shot
Marlin Meldonian

Submit "Cover Photo" material to the Newsletter Editor Suzan Meldonian, 561-394-6391 or e-mail: newsletter@sfups.org Please include a short paragraph about the photo, including camera information and location. DEADLINE IS THE 25th!

Presentation:
Suzan Meldonian
Under the Bridge

Intra-Club Contest Winners January 2010
Members in the News- Excellence Continues into the New Year!
New 2010 Intra Club Contest Subjects
Rare fish photographed at the Bridge
Cancun Underwater Museum Unveiled
Links to Photo Contests
ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE
RARE FISH PHOTOGRAPHED

On Christmas day 2009, underwater photographer Laurel Bartels got a once-in-a-lifetime present while diving at the Blue Heron Bridge (aka, Lake Worth Lagoon) in Riviera Beach Florida. She spotted the rare Smooth Puffer \( (Lagocephalus laevigatus) \), or as Laurel described it “a fish about two feet long that looked like a torpedo sitting on the bottom of the ocean floor”. According to George H. Burgess of the Florida Museum of Natural History it’s the first underwater shot he’s seen of \( Lagocephalus laevigatus \). Burgess himself has only seen three Smooth Puffer’s in 40+ years of fish work. Laurel “was very lucky to ‘catch’ that puffer - a real rarity!”

According to Laurel “my first dive at Blue Heron Bridge was a night dive with Force-E and I was hooked. But actually, the Blue Heron Bridge was a dive site that I had wanted to go to for quite a while...ever since I saw the underwater photos from Force-E divers like Deb Devers. The owners of Force-E, Skip and Cathy Commagere, have been very generous by purchasing the permits and providing Force-E staff to lead night dives there.” You can only dive the Blue Heron Bridge at slack high tide, which is about an hour before and after high tide. Also, you can only dive there at night with a permit from the city.

“On our Christmas Day dive, my boyfriend Eric Rippon and I were trying out my new camera. I had recently taken a photography seminar from Marty Snyderman and I was anxious to try and put to use some of the new techniques I had learned from him. But, actually, I had put the new camera away and was heading in when we spotted the puffer. I still had my point-and-shoot camera handy and was able to capture a couple of images.”

Sea life under the Blue Heron Bridge is plentiful indeed as evidenced by a recently published book “Under the Bridge - the Creatures of a Coastal Inlet” by Suzan Meldonian. And in a final note from Laurel, “Blue Heron Bridge is one of my favorite places to dive...not only because of the Smooth Puffer find which was fantastic...but every time I dive there I come up saying where else can you see such diversity of sea-life in ONE dive?”

Plan a dive trip to the Blue Heron Bridge and you too may find your own special present. Sent in to Divenewswire.com by Eric Rippon. Photos courtesy of Laurel Bartels
This month,

Suzan Meldonian will be presenting a fish eye view of the amazing marine life found under the Blue Heron Bridge and presenting her new book, Under the Bridge. Suzan will have copies for sale after the presentation and will be happy to sign them for you!

As some say... the secret is out. A couple of years ago, it began with one sea horse. Suzan began diving the bridge every weekend with her friend, Judy Townsend, spurred on by wanting to become comfortable with her new digital camera in an easy environment, shallow dive area.

"Even though I've dived the bridge on many occasions, it soon became my home away from home. I found myself constantly flabbergasted by the diverse life and discovery, and the fact that every single weekend without fail, we found something new, or saw something we'd never seen before, whether it was a mimic octopus mimicking a flounder or a slumbering manatee or graceful spotted eagle rays. It soon became a hunting expedition, to seek out everything and anything unusual, different, colorful, cool, bizarre or just practice taking better pictures.

I've met a lot of great folks up there, also very dedicated to the craft of uw photography. Special thanks goes out to a few folks who contributed to this collection: Judy Townsend, Steve Kovacs, Deb Devers, Lureen Ferretti, Linda Ianniello, Marlin Meldonian, Anne DuPont, Shen Collazo, Sharon Baron and Jim Abernathy for his aerial shots of the bridge."

Due to its close proximity to the Gulf Stream current that runs parallel to the eastern seaboard, amazing creatures follow the channel in and have a look about, come to spawn, set up house, or just stop for a bite at the Blue Heron Bridge. What makes this muck dive so special? You just never know what you are going to see.

Then Eric Cheng and Jim Abernathy got a petition started to make the Bridge a “No-take” zone, and were very successful in getting this accomplished August 2008. Now that it is a no take zone, we can share with many, the wonders that we have discovered and not worry about them being shlooshed up and away.

Important!!!
Diving the bridge is subject to slack tide rules... (1 hour before high tide). The currents can be strong, the water can be murky and the area, while the size of approximately two football fields, is flanked by boaters, channel markers, water sheriffs and the occasional “lost” wave runner. To add spice to our life, the bridge is now undergoing construction to repair its old tired legs. Therefore caution in observing these factors is very important. Diving the bridge is always a rewarding experience, and fairly hassle free, but it is important to not go in too early, and to know when to get out when the visibility changes, so that you don’t get lost and end up in the channel. Safety first.
Behold the new world wonder in the Mexican Caribbean.

“You can use art as a way of conveying hope... providing hope for the future and inspiring people to think about their role on the planet.”

Jason de Caires Taylor

Cancun Nautical Association Presents the new.

CANCUN UNDERWATER MUSEUM

Art by Jason de Caires Taylor.

“Natural Reef Conservation with Culture”.

Tel. 01.52 (998) 848.83.12
Fax. 01.52 (998) 848.83.10
robertodiaz@asociadosnauticoscancun.com
www.asociadosnauticoscancun.com

Your Local Source!
954.537.0644
Cancun, Mexico –November 9th, 2009 -- The National Park West Coast of Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancun and Punta Nizuc, which receives approximately 750,000 tourists annually, will feature more than 400 concrete sculpture figurines comprising the world’s largest underwater museum, right in the waters in front of Cancun and the island of Isla Mujeres.

At a cost of more than US $350,000 seed capital, the project has been put into place to give the natural reefs the opportunity to flourish. The Marine National Park has stepped up to the challenge of diverting tourists away from natural habitats along the natural coral reef units without losing their visitors and the US $36 million they bring directly into the area each year.

Approximately 400 sculptures will be created by internationally renowned underwater sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor and will then be sunk within this National Park on the barren areas of seabed at various depths. The first placing of sculptures will begin on November 14th 2009. Each piece of art will be life-sized, with a base of four square meters. There will be several theme based installations, such as an army of indigenous Mayan people entitled “The Silent Evolution” and other sculptures such as the “Dream Collector” who catalogues messages in bottles set adrift from various corners of the world.

One of the first messages in a bottle attached to the above mentioned sculpture reads: “May our hearts, never become as hard as our heads”, by Roberto Diaz, President of the Cancun Underwater Museum.

“This is a unique opportunity to explore the boundaries of art and combine it with reef conservation” said Jason de Caires Taylor, British underwater sculptor of the unique sculptures. The main piece will encompass between 300 to 400 lifelike figures based on actual living people. Once the main first phase of the project is completed other artists will be encouraged to submit their own sculptures and contribute to this unique museum.

The National Park’s director, Jaime Gonzalez Cano, calculates that by April 2010 there will be approximately 250 sculptures in the underwater museum.

“The underwater museum will draw many visitors, allowing us to give a rest to the natural reefs. It’s like a restoration process”, Gonzalez explained.

Upon the opening of the museum, divers will be required to gain experience in artificial habitats and snorkelers will continue to wear life jackets for buoyancy to prevent damaging the natural corals and the new artificial habitats.

About Cancun

Cancun is located in the northern part of the southeastern Mexican state of Quintana Roo. The island of Cancun is in the shape of a “7” and is bordered to the north by the Bahia de Mujeres; to the east by the Caribbean Sea; and to the west by the Nichupte Lagoon. Cancun is Mexico’s largest tourist destination and boasts 146 hotels with a total of 28,808 rooms. Opportunities for new experiences abound in Cancun, which offers visitors an ideal setting for interacting with nature and discovering Mayan culture.

Cancun Convention and Visitors Bureau www.cancun.travel

About the project and its author, please visit www.underwatersculpture.com
WINNERS of the INTRA CLUB CONTEST:
January: Masters Frogfish

1st Place: Rob Myers

2nd Place: Wayne MacWilliams

3rd Place: Shen Collazo

4th Place: Wayne MacWilliams

5th Place: Linda Ianniello
WINNERS of the INTRA CLUB CONTEST January:
CHALLENGERS: Silver

1st Place: Mike Schmale

2nd Place: Shen Collazo

3rd Place: Fletcher Forbes

4th Place: Bill Cook

5th Place: Steve Jarocki
2010 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 Alena Carlini at audiovisual@sfups.org by 12 noon on the Sunday before the meeting.

Alena will send you a confirming email to let you know she has received the file. Send to audiovisual@sfups.org

If you can’t find your newsletter- you can always check on our website. For our new members, winning shots accumulate points throughout the year. Challengers may compete in both Challengers and Masters categories. Only 2 entries per month -per person (except on the day contests). Masters are those who have previously won Photographer of the year, and they may only compete in the Masters categories.

The person with the highest points wins the illustrious title of “Photographer of the Year” and is awarded a beautiful trophy. Please see the website for the point system. Good luck! Bonne chance!
# Contest Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Odd Couples – main subject of the photo is two fish/creatures that are not of the same species doing something together. The key word is odd – this excludes cleaning or symbiosis which are &quot;normal&quot; for the featured species.</td>
<td>Sand Dwellers – fishes or other mobile creatures that make their home in the sand (animals, not plants; may include anemones, sea pens - which are soft corals, mushroom corals - which are hard corals).</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Jellies – includes jellyfishes, box jellies, salps, and other free-swimming gelatinous or jelly-like animals.</td>
<td>Sea Slugs - must be a gastropod mollusk which includes headshield slugs, sapsucking slugs, side-gill slugs, seahares and nudibranchs. Does not include flatworms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Silhouettes – subject must be very dark to black against a light background.</td>
<td>Ambient Light – no strobes, photos taken in shallower water work best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Pretty in Pink</td>
<td>Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Humor – may include divers.</td>
<td>Wide Angle featuring Sponges – a sponge or group of sponges as the main subject of the W/A photo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Polka Dots – a fish or creature that has well-defined dots, not irregular splotches.</td>
<td>Bars &amp; Stripes – subject must have contrasting vertical (bars), horizontal (stripes) or oblique bands or lines of color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Squid or Cuttlefish</td>
<td>Octopus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Close Focus Wide Angle – forced perspective - the main subject is very close to the lens and looks larger than life when compared to the wide angle background.</td>
<td>Reef Scapes – reef scenes shot with a wide angle lens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Carry the Load – a creature physically carrying something. (e.g. crab with urchin on back, jawfish with rock in mouth, cardinalfish with eggs in mouth).</td>
<td>Hitching a Ride – a fish or creature riding on another fish/creature. (e.g. a remora on a shark, a shrimp on a nudibranch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Commensalism – two different animals living together in a symbiotic relationship in which one or both benefit but neither is harmed (e.g. Shrimp-goby with its host shrimp, anemonefish in host anemone).</td>
<td>Cleaning Stations - must feature the cleaner and its client(s).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Special (November)**

“Creative” – anything goes (no points for this one, just have fun & let your imagination run wild).

To be announced: Sometime between May and October there will be an on-the-day contest in which contestants participate in a dive or dives and submit up to two of their photos taken on those dives. This one is for points, open to all club members. Space may be limited depending on the venue, so sign up early once this is announced.
2010 Windland Smith Rice International Awards

Nature’s Best Photography magazine invite all photographers to enter the 2010 Windland Smith Rice International Awards competition. Category Winners and a selection of Highly Honored photographs will be displayed in an exhibition at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, one of the most widely respected and highly visited museums in the world. In addition, all winning images will be published in the 2010 Awards collector’s edition of Nature’s Best Photography magazine. Entries are judged on technical quality, originality, and artistic merit. Enter a TOTAL of up to 20 images for one entry fee of $25 US dollars this website or mailed to our office in Reston, Virginia, USA (see below). Deadline: January 1 until April 5, 2010

http://www.naturesbestphotography.com/enter_guidelines.php

National Wildlife

Deadline is July 6. http://www.nwf.org/PhotoContest/ is now accepting entries to our 40th annual contest. Cash prizes totaling more than $30,000 — including two $5,000 grand prizes — will be awarded to the winners in three divisions: Professional, Amateur and Youth. Winning photographs will be published online and a selection will appear in the December 2010 issue of the magazine. Enter today! Visit our 2010 Contest page for entry details and categories. Deadline is July 6.

BioBlitz - Registration Now Open for Scientists and Experts

Dear BioBlitzers: On-line registration is now open for scientists, naturalists, and other experts who wish to lead efforts to identify species within the park. Please follow the registration link on the BioBlitz web site, www.nationalgeographic.com/bioblitz

On that web site, you will also see a link to “Important information and papers for scientists” which takes you to meeting notes, presentations, and related documents from the January 22 orientation session. They cover issues like research permit requirements, boat logistics, opportunities to work with K-12 school groups, curation requirements, maps, etc. We know that many of you could not attend the session and we promised that we would distribute the files.

This year’s BioBlitz is logistically complicated because most travel requires boats and we cannot assume liability for the use of boats provided by anyone other than the National Park Service. We’ve tried to make the issue clear on the registration page, but if you have questions or are uncertain about how to register and participate in the blitz, please call or email.

Please note that registration closes on March 1, after which we will diligently assemble and launch the public registration site. Because of spam filters, it’s possible that some people on this distribution list will not see this email. If you have colleagues who want to participate as experts, please forward this message to them. Thank you again for your interest in the BioBlitz and in Biscayne National Park! We are all looking forward to meeting you at the BioBlitz and discovering all sorts of fascinating organisms.

Best wishes, Tim Watkins NGS/NPS Bioblitz Team Bioblitz@ngs.org
THE CLASSIFIED’S

DUES ARE DUE

It’s time to pay your dues for 2010. The annual dues are:

- $35.00 for an individual (STILL!!!)
- $45.00 for a family
- $20.00 for an “Out of the Area” non-participating membership

Send your check, made out to “SFUPS”, to:

Steve Jarocki
8907 W. Oakland Park Blvd.
Sunrise, FL 33351
(Or, bring your check to the next meeting)

FOR SALE:
Nikon D200 camera with Nikon 12-24 lens and Subal ND20 housing with magnifying viewfinder for $3,300.

Contact Fletcher Forbes - jandfforbes@mac.com

FOR SALE:
Canon XT (300D) Digital Rebel (body only), Ikelite housing with built-in electronic controls, 6-inch dome port for wide angle and flat port for 18-55 or 60 mm macro lenses, charger, two batteries and owner’s manual. Both camera and housing are in perfect working condition. The camera has a scratch on the top. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . $1,000 firm.

Contact Amaury Cruz - amaurycruz@yahoo.com

RSMAS Sea Secrets Lectures Back in Full swing
http://www.rsmas.miami.edu/info/calendar/
Parting Shot
by
Marlin Meldonian

Marlin Meldonian is the SFUPS Featured Photographer for February 2010.

Visit www.sfups.org to see our galleries.

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:

Steve Jarocki, 8907 W. Oakland Pk. Blvd., Sunrise, FL 33351

Membership forms can be found on our website at www.sfups.org and will also be available at the meetings.