

At the May 1st Meeting James Heimer Presents:

Underwater Video for Beginners

By Dennis Deavenport

James Heimer is one of a growing minority in HUPS... he shoots digital video and loves it. James and his wife Kandace have only been HUPS members for a short time but he has a wealth of experience in the diving arena. He began diving in 1970 when he was stationed in Hawaii in the Navy. He was certified by an ex Marine sergeant who ran his certification program like he was still an active duty DI. Since that time he has been diving around the world from Norway to Tahiti, including northern and southern California, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico (both coasts), the Bahamas, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Coral Sea. However, it wasn't until he met his wife Kandace (on a diving trip to Belize in 1990) that he ventured into the Caribbean and has now experienced Honduras, Aruba, Bonaire, several Virgin and two Cayman Islands.

His UW photography experience started in the 70's with a plastic Japanese housing that screwed together like a big clamshell watch case., a wind-up 35 mm camera, and an external flash using real flash bulbs (remember those?). In 1997 at SEASPACE he got seduced by Light and Motion and ended up with a Mako housing, Stingray lights, and a Sony PC100 digital video camcorder. Since that time



he has shot many hours of underwater action including bull sharks off Grand Bahama. Since 2003, he has been very active in editing his work.

James' presentation will be targeted for beginners and those just getting into digital video. The program will cover the following topics:

- Overview of Underwater Video Equipment - He will discuss camcorders, housings, and lighting systems and will address the current state of play with respect to high definition video, and recording to hard drives and direct to DVD vs mini DV tapes. He will also demonstrate setting up the camera, housing and lighting using his Light and Motion Mako housing and Sony PC100 camcorder.

- Underwater Video Techniques - He will discuss such techniques as placing the subject in perspective, use of wide angle vs zoom perspectives, limitation of lighting, and planning a dive trip scenario to create a trip DVD.

- Video Editing - He will show the features of entry level video editing software using Sony Vegas Movie Studio, including capturing video into the program, adding and cropping scenes, using titles and transitions, and adding music and sound.

Then James will end the evening with two short edited shows taken on some of his recent trips.

If you have been thinking about getting into digital video, you'll not want to miss this show. Even if you're totally committed to still photography, bring a friend and enjoy the show. You'll probably learn something worthwhile and have a good time. Plan ahead and get to the meeting early. It's always fun to talk with your friends or make new ones. The curtain goes up at 7 pm, Monday May 1st. We hope to see you at the meeting. As always the meeting will start at 7 PM and will be held at the Bayland Community Center on Bissonnett. A map can found on the back page of this newsletter. See you there!

President's Message

Gearing Up for the Season

As we all prepare for the peak of the Dive Season, I just wanted to touch on some things that help Yvonne and I plan for our Dive Travels.

One of the most stressful times can be the planning and packing for a Dive Trip. It seems that along with the excitement of preparing for the trip comes tons of anxiety of what to take, when to pack, how much to take and that sort of thing. With the new weight constraints put on us all by the Airlines, weight has become a real issue. For Photographers that puts an added strain on us all. The new limits on Continental allow for 50 lbs per bag unless you are an Elite member which allows 70 lbs per bag. This isn't supposed to include dive gear according to a memo on Continentals own employee website (of which I have a copy of) but they always give you a hard time about it so it's better to just plan that way and save your self some grief.

The first thing we always do is to make sure we have any medication prescriptions filled well ahead of our trip. I always secure a new prescription for an Epi-Pen and some Diprolene Cream from our Physician. just in case we may need it for any type of allergic reactions that we may encounter while diving. This could be a life saver! If we are planning a trip to a remote location, I always try to get to the Dentist before hand as well. You don't want any unexpected problems to arise while in the middle of nowhere. We also stock up on plenty of basic over the counter cold and flu stuff. You never know if you will be able to get it. I have sleeping pills for long flights across the "Big Pond" to help acclimate to the date and time changes. This way we can take one as soon as we takeoff and sleep the majority of the day to acclimate. Make sure you have a copy of your prescriptions with you at all times.

Aside from all the medical preparations, I always confirm and email my self a copy of my DAN insurance and misc. policies as well as passport and any other pertinent information. You can always obtain email from anywhere around the world in case your luggage is lost.

With the new weight limits in mind, its time to plan on what to take. We know that we will spend most of the time in the water so minimal clothes is at the top of our list. We have found that the easiest way to travel is for us to employ 1 Dive Bag each, a small carryon with personal hygiene and misc. stuff and one 54qt Ice Chest for the Camera Gear. This also serves as a rinse tank for my camera on the boat if they don't have one.

I will wrap all the camera gear with our clothes to pad everything and conserve space. The ice chest has a metal bar across the top and locks to the ice chest with TSA locks on the sides. Although this works very well for us, there are also numerous good options other people use that may work well for them. The important thing is to find one that works best for you. There is no right or wrong way.

With our new images, on the return trip, I try not to not put all our eggs in one basket. I keep a copy of our digital files in a few different places to be safe in case some luggage is lost. I keep a copy on my laptop, which I have with me, a DVD in the Carry on and another DVD in the Dive Bag. You can always replace gear but your Images are irreplaceable.

The main thing is to give yourself plenty of time and don't stress over it. This system works well for us and has made a big difference in our travel planning. The important thing is to make sure all your equipment is insured and relax and enjoy the trip.

Lets Dive,
Chuck

Thanks Ken

By Dennis Deavenport

Ken admitted to me after the April meeting that he really put a lot of effort into researching and crafting his presentation. Well, having seen the show, I can certainly believe that! The most descriptive phrase that I can come up with to describe the experience is: "A wealth of practical knowledge". Ken has been there (just about everywhere, in fact) and has a trunk full of T-shirts to prove it. The good old School of Hard Knocks was one of his trainers but he also solicited advice and comments from many of the best UW photographers in the country.

If you're planning a trip anytime soon, hang onto the 4-page check-sheet that he passed out at the meeting. I just got through packing for HUPS' trip to Lembeh Strait and Gangga Island and the list was beside me most of the time. It's now full of margin notes and check marks. What a great tool for planning your next dive/photography expedition!

And if the main presentation wasn't enough, Ken trotted out a show that he just put together of his work taken with his new digital Nikon D2x system. Once again, it was obvious we were in the presence of enormous talent.

Thanks Ken for a valuable and fun evening. Bring more hand-outs to the next meeting.

HUPS Travel Update

By Tom Collier, HUPS Trip Coordinator

September 9-10, 2006

Digital Workshop at the Flower Gardens

8 spots open. - HUPS will be hosting a Flower Gardens Dive Trip and Digital Photography Workshop in September 2006. James Wiseman will be presenting lectures covering digital photography topics such as gear selection and setup, digital photo underwater techniques, topsides image processing, and image archiving.

If you would like to participate in this dive trip and workshop please mail your deposit as soon as possible. We will fill the trip on a first come first served basis. Full payment must be received by July 31, 2006.

\$ 405.00 = Trip cost (\$65.00 extra for Nitrox)
\$ 50.00 = Deposit required to reserve your spot

Mail Deposit = Tom Collier, 1806 Buchanan St., Brenham, Tx 77833.

Summer 2007

Still working on planning a 2007 trip. Where do you want to go? Email any ideas and/or suggestions.

HUPS Trip Coordinator: Tom Collier, tom@tpixs.com

First Workshop of 2006 Complete - More to Come!

On April 22 James Wiseman did a great job at the Intro to Digital Workshop. It was obvious that James put many hours into preparing his Powerpoint slides and lecture. James is an enthusiastic teacher and full of knowledge. Thanks for sharing your time, energy and talents.

If you missed the first workshop there are several others in the works. These workshops are free to HUPS members and are an excellent way to sharpen your underwater photography skills. The next event we have scheduled is the "Getting Started in Digital Underwater Photography" workshop. It will be held on May 6th. This is a great workshop that will help attendees with everything from deciding what type of camera to buy to actually creating great images.

Here is the complete lineup for 2006:

Getting Started in Digital UW Photography: May 6

Composition: TBA

Photoshop and Digital Workflow: August 19

Lighting and Lighting Technique: November 11

How is that for some educational opportunities? You are in HUPS to learn how to get better photos right? Well get out there and attend those workshops. You are guaranteed to learn something. When you see James tell him thanks for all his hard work.



Novice Digital 1st Place- Ned Shimizu, © 2006

Quick Tip

Be sure to check your strobe position frequently during a dive. Often external strobes can get bumped out of position. This can cause you to miss the shot. Before shooting look where your strobe is pointing and correct it if required.

If you have a tip that would be of interest to other HUPS members please send it to David Lenderman - underh2o@ev1.net.

FOR SALE

Members are welcome to submit for sale ads of scuba and photography related items. These ads will run in the newsletter space permitting for three months at no charge.

Nikon PB6 bellows and rail with PS6 slide copying adapter, with the double cable release needed. It's pristine though 10 (?) years old. Retail around \$400, but will sell for \$100 or best offer.

Pentax 90WR Zoom 38-90 auto-focus FILM camera. It's water resistant and is a great beach/rafting/... camera. Great condition. Original retail about \$300, but will sell for best offer.

Contact Dave Van Rooy dvanrooy@SeaBelow.com

Check it Out on the Web

So, like all of us you want to improve your images. A huge factor in having great images is composition. Below is a link to some good information on underwater composition. Take a look and learn something.

<http://www.daveread.com/uw%2Dphoto/comp101/>

Calling all Writers

The HUPS newsletter is **always** looking (begging) for articles. If you have anything you would like to share send it to underh2o@ev1.net. We welcome trip reports, equipment reviews, photo tips, suggestion of underwater photography related websites, just about anything that would interest your fellow underwater photographers. We can't have an informative, entertaining newsletter without your contributions.



Advanced Digital 2nd Place - Mary Lou Reid, © 2006

Upcoming Monthly Photo Contest Topics

Each month we will have digital and slide contests. For complete contest rules checkout:

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

May - Texture and Color

August - Reef Scenes

June - Anemones and things that live in them

September - Two or more of a kind

July - Shoot your Buddy - Shots with divers

October - eels (moray, garden, etc.)

How to be a Good UW Photographer Part Three - Know Your Photo Gear!

By David Lenderman

This article is the fourth in a multi-part series on what an underwater photographer has to do to get consistently good images. There are lots of things that go into making a good photographer. I will try to cover the points that you MUST do to be a good underwater photographer.

As an underwater photographer striving for great images you must have a thorough understanding of your gear and it's limitations. You should understand what all those buttons and knobs do on your camera housing. This is easy to practice. Just assemble your camera and housing and take photos in your living room. Want to simulate a night dive? Just turn off the lights and keep shooting. This exercise will go a long way to help you learn your camera controls by feel.

Today's modern digital cameras have so many features that it is nearly impossible for one person to understand and remember them all. Understanding every feature is not nearly as important as understanding the basic, most used functions of your camera and related gear. For example your camera's exposure metering system. Is it a matrix, center weighted or is it selectable exposure meter? Do you know when to employ the matrix versus center weighted versus spot metering? Understanding this will help improve your images. A really crazy way to learn about your camera is to read the instructions. Does anyone do this? You would be surprised by all the important information contained in your camera and strobe instruction manuals.

In general you are not going to come home with tons of contest winning images by leaving your camera in Program or Auto mode. This means to get better results you will be shooting in manual or maybe aperture priority. Do you know how to do this? Do you know what f-stop/distance/strobe power combinations give you the best exposures? Even if you have functioning TTL you need to understand these f-stop/distance/strobe power combinations. Sure, while at 100 feet you can take shot after shot of the pigmy sea horse while fumbling with your camera and strobe settings, but there is an easier way. Practice this in advance. Go to a pool and practice shooting different sized objects with various f-stop/distance/strobe power combinations. You will learn the sweet spots for your gear. Save the images to refer to later and write down the sweet spot settings. You can even put these settings on a laminated card to take underwater. While diving you can employ these sweet spots and come home with lots of great images.

Another key thing you must understand about your gear is its limitations. You need to understand for what type/size of subjects your set up is optimized. If you have a macro set up on your camera don't waste time, air or memory space chasing the whale shark or manta that swims by. Conversely, if you have a wide-angle lens on your camera skip the nudibranch. Spend your dive time on what your particular camera setup does best. If you put on a 105mm lens to shoot small critters and fish faces then stick to it. Be selective, if you are shooting everything on the reef you will end up with a bunch of so-so images. What you are really after are a bunch of WOW! - WOW! images.

Monthly Contest Results

March: Natural Light Digital - Advanced

1st - Jackie Reid
2nd - Mary Lou Reid
3rd - Jackie Reid

Digital - Novice

1st - Ned Shimizu
2nd - Patricia Lin
3rd - Ned Shimizu

Slides - Combined

1st - Jackie Reid
2nd - Mary Lou Reid
3rd - Jackie Reid

Texture and Color

On the reef it's everywhere. The patterns of brain coral, waves in the sand, the swirl of a shell. There are an astounding variety of colors and textures on any reef dive. If you have taken the time to enjoy and photograph them please take the time to enter some images in the May contest whose topic is "Texture & Color". You can't win if you don't enter.

At monthly meetings we will have both slide and digital contests. Entries for the slide contest should be brought to the meeting. Entries for the digital contest should be emailed to photocontest@hups.org at least **48 hours prior** to the meeting. This mailbox is reserved for entries only. If you have a question regarding the digital contest send your email to ddeavenport@houston.rr.com or james@reefs.org. Complete contest rules can be found at <http://www.hups.org/contestr.htm>. If you do not follow all the rules for digital entries your images will not be judged.

A Trip to Raja Ampat's Sorido Bay Resort and What does a Million Dollar Cat Look Like?

By John Anderson

My story began in June, 2005 when my son Ken & I left Houston via Continental Airlines to Los Angeles, California & boarded a Singapore Airlines Boeing 747 for our first stage of our flight to Tokyo Japan. From Tokyo we would fly on to Singapore then on to the Island of Manado in Indonesia for Asian Divers Sponsored Underwater Shootout, but that is another story. On part of this trip we would fly from Manado to Sorong which is off the coast of Papua New Guinea for a week of underwater photography.

In Tokyo we had to exit the plane to go through Immigration & then we were allowed to re-board our plane. After we had re-boarded the plane all of the passengers were asked to exit the plane again. We were informed that we would be transported to hotels in the city for an unexpected overnight stay. It appears that when the Japanese Customs officials were examining a domestic cat in its airline approved carrier, they did not secure the lock on the cage & the cat escaped in the cargo hold of the plane! Well, before our trip I was told by Tina of Island Dreams Travel Agency that "Singapore Airlines was rated Number One in the world as to customer satisfaction in the airline industry", and now I truly believe it. Singapore Airlines footed all the bills, including providing at least 8 large buses to transport all of the 500 passengers to first class hotels all over the city of Tokyo. Ken and I stayed at the Marriott Hotel in Disney Land where we were offered a late night meal. At the hotels all passengers were given a phone card so they could contact anyone in the world about the travel delay & they rescheduled all of the passenger's connecting flights for the next day. They would have burped us if we had asked or needed it. They were really into helping customers to the fullest.

The next morning as we boarded our plane we were informed that they found the cat alive, "Hallelujah!" I did not see the cat but was told by a reliable source that it looked like a very scrawny common looking 2 bit alley cat & not the least bit like a \$1,000,000 cat, which now it has become. Most likely the \$1,000,000 Cat had lost most of its luster, beauty & weight by being chased around and around in the cargo hold of the plane all night long. After settling in with what I thought was a good book, I started to doze & I heard what I thought was a faint voice that was more like the sound of a purring voice saying, I didn't do it you dirty rat, it was the Japanese Customs Official that made me do it. He made me get out of my cage to go looking for someone to re-lock the cage door, because I was so scared with the cage door open. This is the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me so help my 9 Lives. I really don't know if it was a dream or the \$1,000,000 Cat talking but the Cat started to sound more more like like James Cagney & as I open my eyes they were playing an old gangster movie starring James Cagney.

In Sorong with a short taxi ride we boarded a 30 foot narrow beamed enclosed launch at dusk & headed for Kri Island, that is located off the northwest tip of the Bird Head Peninsula of the island of New Guinea in the Raja Ampat area. As we proceeded to the island for more than hour in total darkness a slight rain squall developed. I asked the representative from Sorido Bay Resort how the helmsman could find this island in total darkness

with no apparent compass. His answer was, "Oh, he lives in this area & does this all of the time." I finally noticed that he was actually using the North Star for navigation. Upon arriving at Kri Island, at the Sorido Bay Resort pier, we were met as we climbed on to the pier by the owner & builder of this resort, Max Ammer & team member, Teri Perry the resort's "Girl Friday & Manager". There were only three bungalows that were completed so the six of us filled the resort. Our initial impression of this Resort & its surroundings was one of wonder. Our stay there for the next week refortified that opinion that this is a beautiful place that may be found only once in a life time & that it was a privilege just to be there & enjoy the beauty above & below the ocean. Our group's opinion concerning the food that it was some of the best food & the details to our meals we have had in weeks. The dive sites are too many to talk about and they were all so great. But there is one site that needs to be mentioned and that is Mike's Point, which is so close you can almost throw a rock to the reef from the Resort's pier. I should also mention a couple of other great dive sites Chicken & Sardine. Most of the dive sites are but a short 15 minutes or less of a boat ride from the resort pier, so most dives are a one tank dive, allowing you to come back for a short rest before going out for the next dive. When you are diving there it is like you are the very first one with no broken coral or other reminders of past divers. The endless diverse schools of tropical fish proves that this is indeed the center & the capital of Indo-Pacific biodiversity. In the week we spent there we only saw one other dive boat in the distance & we joked that there goes the neighborhood.

Their dive boat is a little sparse for comfort & some basic dive boat equipment but they are serviceable & in the development stage, but for the most part, the rest of their operation is very efficient. Otto, our Dive Master, is truly is a master of many talents: Dive Guide, Boat Captain, Translator, Travel Guide, & Musician.

Max the owner was a gracious host with us during our stay & would join us almost every evening for dinner & ask us where we would like to go the next day for diving. One evening he asked if we would like to go on a full day trip of diving & also go to a Bat Cave that is in the Kaboei Bay area. A resounding yes could be heard from the six of us. The next day we set off early in the morning in our open dive boat for a two hour boat ride. Our first dive of the day was one of wonder & beauty because the islands are so closely joined that it appeared that we were in a freshwater river but no, we were in an area called the "Passage" that is in the Kaboei Bay area. To dive in the Passage is an unforgettable experience because it was like going down a Water World Park Slide underwater. Caves & walls & bottoms were literally covered with all different colors of gorgonian coral, soft coral & every hue of colored tunicates. To get to the bat cave we actually just drove our boat into the cave & tied it up. We climbed up a short bank & with our flash lights in our hands peered deeper into the cave & viewed a remarkable sight of thousands upon thousands of bats, flying or hanging on to the ceiling over our heads. As we walked deeper in into the cave there was a constant sound of swishing of air noise from the bats flying around you. They never touched us but I bet the \$1,000,000 Cat would have loved to try & catch one.

We had a most pleasant and fortunate experience on our last evening, for the resident workers at the resort presented us with their music with their home made wooden musical instruments of guitars, basses, & drums. This presentation left us with such a good feeling of the local people of Papua Indonesia & it was reaffirmed the next day when we were heading home by boat to

Sorong to catch our planes to the US & Germany. We stopped at “Sawandarek” a native fishing village. The lack of a spoken language did not seem to present a problem between our two cultures because friendship was extruded everywhere in the form of smiles from the smallest of the children to the adults. Our smiling faces presented a universal nonverbal communication of friendship & with no desire of the others possessions but only as a unique person. The whole town turned out to see us & we to see them. They are not used to seeing Caucasians & were curious about us as we were with them & their village.

We had learned one Indonesian word there that day that filled the air as our boat moved away from the pier “terimah kasih” which means “many thanks”. In trying to summarize my feeling for this whole adventure & especially the beautiful Sorido Bay Resort in just a few words would be very difficult but here are my opinions & my feelings.

In order for you to reach this area you must be content to travel to one of the most remote diving areas in the world, it is for the experienced divers that like to dive, it is expensive, it has pristine marine life, openness of its people & the beauty of this area are unforgettable. These statements seem to bring forth the words that seems to fit. It is one of the most beautiful places that God has made & I would not take back one minute’s time or money or even the \$1,000,000 experience that I had spent on this trip.

I want to personally thank Ken Kenezick’s Island Dreams for his help & his employee Tina Robinette-Miller for her quality help in putting this package together.

More Chips and Salsa Please

Everyone is welcome to join us for some Tex-Mex following HUPS meetings. A number of us meet at Don Carlo’s Mexican Restaurant. This is a great opportunity to socialize with fellow HUPS members and eat some good Tex-Mex. It won’t hurt you to stay up past 10 PM just one night a month. It is on the 59 Northbound feeder just North of Hillcroft. Exiting Bayland Community Center go left on Bissonnett, left on Hillcroft and then right on the 59 feeder. It’s about 100 yards on your right. You can’t miss it.



Digital Advanced 1st place - Jackie Reid, © 2006

Basic Concept of the Month - Exposure Metering Patterns

Most modern cameras offers several selectable exposure metering settings. Usually options include spot metering, center weighted metering and multi zone evaluative metering (Nikon calls it Matrix Metering other camera makers call it different names). Spot metering is just what it sounds like. With this setting the camera will calculate exposure based on a single small spot. This single spot is usually in the very center of the frame. Center weighted metering is when the camera uses the middle portion of the frame for determining exposure. This varies by camera but usually takes up the center 20 - 30% of the frame. With Matrix Metering the camera looks at multiple areas in the frame and uses some mathematical formula to average these points into a single exposure.

In an effort to help educate our less experienced members we will try to feature a basic term or concept in each month’s newsletter. If you have an idea for a featured concept or have a question you would like answered email it to underh2o@evl.net.

Important Dates

Put them on your calendar

May 1

HUPS meeting - Jim Heimer - Digital Video for Beginners

May 27

HUPS Composition Workshop

July 10

HUPS meeting - TBA

May 6

HUPS Getting Started in Digital Underwater Photography - Workshop geared toward non-members and new digital UW photographers

June 5

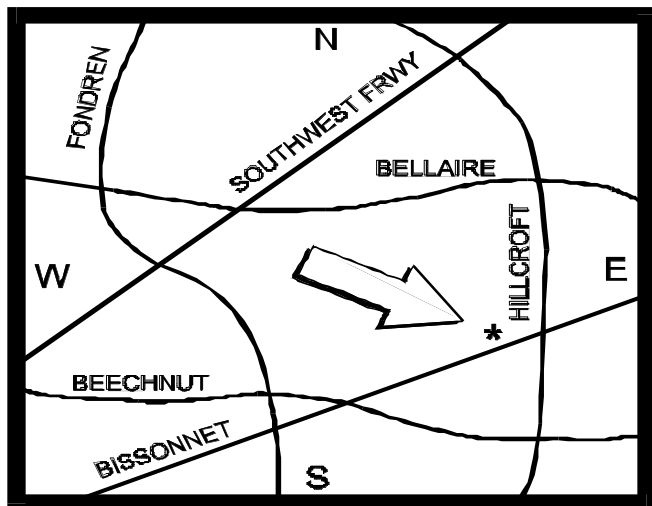
HUPS Meeting - Christa Lousalot - Red Sea Adventures

August 7

HUPS Meeting - Mary Lou & Jackie Reid - 2005 Retrospective and Digital Asset Management

The Houston Underwater Photographic Society meets the first Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, near Hillcroft. Social time begins at 6:45. Visitors always welcome

*** BAYLAND COMMUNITY CENTER**



<http://www.hups.org>

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**Underwater
Images**

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