

At the June 5th Meeting Christa Loustalot Presents: Through a Persian Gulf Looking Glass

By Dennis Deavenport

Christa Loustalot, one of HUPS' far-flung ex-pat members, will be making a reappearance this June in friendly Houston. To commemorate the occasion she has been invited to give a presentation to HUPS on her diving experiences in the Persian Gulf. Early this year, Christa and her husband, Kurt, packed up and headed off for new adventures in Dubai, the capital of The United Arab Emirates. For those without a handy atlas, Dubai is sits in the far eastern end of the Persian Gulf, only a little over 100 miles from the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Still confused? Think oil, lots of oil. Christa, who never saw a patch of water that she didn't want to dive into with her camera, took this as another chance to check out another unique and exciting diving experience. Salt water, fresh water, cold water, warm water, wrecks, caverns... all are challenges that Christa relishes. Since becoming certified in 1994, she has attained the status of PADI Divemaster and in 2004 became an AAUS certified scuba instructor. In the summer of 2005, Christa spent time with a team of divers exploring and documenting Wisconsin's shipwrecks.

2005 was a very busy year for Christa. At the SEASPACE Film Festival, she was a major contributor in creating "Through the Looking Glass", a 9-minute presentation



Lionfish by Christa Loustalot, © 2006

featuring images from HUPS members. Later in October she helped cover DEMA in Las Vegas where she accepted the Editor's Choice 2005 Award for Wetpixel on the behalf of Eric Chang. Her full DEMA article can be seen at www.wetpixel.com. You can also check her out in www.hups.org in the "featured photographer" section. Other recent honors in 2005 include being chosen as *Scubadiving.com's*

photographer of the week and having one of her photos chosen as the 'Parting Shot' for DAN's *Alert Diver* magazine's Nov/Dec issue.

For Christa, the daughter of a marine biologist and an artist, the old saying that "the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree" is a perfect description. Those that know Christa are aware of her awesome combination of intensity, concentration, and artistic talent. Digital UW photography was a natural creative outlet for Christa. The digital system that she currently uses is an Olympus 5050z camera in an Ikelite TTL housing with dual Ikelite DS125 strobes. Christa has built her own website, www.photograsea.com where it is possible to view examples of her photography. Do yourself a treat and log in to this great site and see her work.

June's presentation, which focuses on her diving experiences in the Persian Gulf, will illustrate Christa's rapidly emerging talent in digital UW photography. Come on down to Bayland Community Center at 7 pm, June 5th to welcome Christa back to Houston and stay to enjoy the show.

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

Negative is Positive

As we all strive to create an image that is most pleasing, one of the things that are easily ignored is what we photographers call "negative space". To create a pleasing image you want to consider a few factors. First you want to decide on ahead of time what you are going to photograph once on the dive. Is it going to be Fish Photos, Corals, Wrecks, Wide angle or Macro. With this in mind you should start thinking about the complete shot and everything surrounding the subject itself well before the dive. I know sometimes it is easy to get caught up in subject itself but if you are patient and think outside the box the end result will be more satisfying.

Negative space is everything that surrounds the subject itself. It's "background" if you will. There are many things to consider. I think you want to capture your subject in its natural environment. This gives the viewer an idea of where the subject lives. It is always more pleasing to shoot up and on a diagonal if possible. As David Lenderman has mentioned in his workshops, try to catch the image as if you are having a conversation with it. (NO fish Butts).

Keep in the mind the "Rule of Thirds" and place your subject on a power point. Always leave a space in front of your subject to move. You don't want to cut off his path with your frame. Be patient and wait for your subject to lend itself to a better background. You don't want a background that distracts from your subject unless you are shooting a camouflage subject such as a flounder in the sand. You want to try to place your subject in a background that compliments it. These are all things you have control of and make for a better image. It is a good idea to save some bad shots from your previous trip to take with you to review on the plane. This will serve as a reminder of what not to do this time around. The negative space of an image is just as important as the primary subject. Use it wisely and you will be happier with your end result....

Lets Dive,
Chuck

Thanks James

By Dennis Deavenport

It was pretty obvious that James Hiemer put a lot of work and talent into his May presentation. However, it didn't happen without a little extra drama when the normal meeting scheduled for May 1st was scrubbed. Bayland Park was chosen as the site for a mass Immigration Rights rally and the Feds strongly recommended that Bayland shut down all activities as a precaution. Luckily, Chuck Jensen was able to reschedule the meeting for the following Monday night and James' hard work did not go to waste. A nice crowd showed up for the meeting, in spite of the confusion. After a brief introduction, James got right into the meat of the show by giving us a nice overview of UW video equipment, including a full demonstration featuring his own UW video gear. This was followed by walking us through some of the techniques he uses when filming UW subjects and how he approaches video editing. His

presentation was capped off with some of his own stellar video work, fully edited and ready for prime time.

Thanks, James, for taking the time to put together a well-crafted, nicely presented educational show. Judging from the number of questions afterward, the audience was equally appreciative of your efforts.

HUPS Travel Update

By Tom Collier, HUPS Trip Coordinator

A bunch of HUPS members recently returned from a very successful trip to North Sulawesi, Indonesia. The group stayed and dived Lembeh Strait and Gangga Island.. Dives varied from muck/critter dives to wide-angle soft coral dives. There were no flooded cameras and everyone had a great time. HUPS members Kimberly & Karl Dietz have put up some images from the trip on their website. Here is a link to that gallery: <http://www.kdietz.com/galleries/underwater/Lembeh2006/default.htm>

September 9-10, 2006

Digital Workshop at the Flower Gardens

6 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

Anyone interested in a trip to the Little Cayman Beach Resort? Or how about shark photography at Stuart Cove's in the Bahamas? We would REALLY like to know where you would like to take a trip with a bunch of like minded underwater photographers. Where do you want to go? Email any ideas and/or suggestions.

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



2nd Place Digital Advanced - Dennis Vernon, © 2006

First Workshop of 2006 Complete - More to Come!

Our May 6th workshop was a big hit. We had 36 people show up to learn more about shooting digital underwater. Many of these people are now new HUPS members. James Wiseman, Dennis Deavenport and David Lenderman all did a fine job of presenting their materials and helping to introduce attendees to the art of digital underwater photography.

We have other workshops being planned for 2006. We are still working out the date for the Composition workshop. We are shooting for late June early July. We hope to have the date nailed down by the June HUPS meeting.

Dates for the other workshops are as follows:
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.

Ike Comes Through Once Again

By Dennis Deavenport

Ikelite's legendary reputation for superb customer service was put to the test one more time early in April. When I was getting my gear packed for the HUPS-sponsored Lembeh expedition, I decided to check out my housing one more time. After dunking it in the bathtub for 4 hours, I took it out and looked it over. No water inside was the good news. However, when I was drying it off afterward, I saw several "star cracks" radiating from a hole drilled through the plexiglass housing where one of the housing clamps was attached by a small bolt. OK, it was Sunday and my flight was coming up Thursday morning. Not a lot of time to scramble for a good solution.

Visions of disaster filled my mind. For all I knew, the cracks had been there since I bought the housing and it had never leaked. The question was whether I wanted to risk a couple of grand on the chance that the cracks wouldn't end up as Niagara Falls when I got the system down to 50-90 feet. The risk didn't seem to be a good one and a call to Ikelite on Monday told me that they didn't think it was a good idea, either. After discussing the situation with their staff, they agreed to pull a new housing out of inventory and send it to me by overnight UPS. In the meantime, I sent my damaged housing back to them to be checked out. I was sweating this out since I was risking a bunch of money for a new housing if they determined the problem was my fault.

To make a long story a bit shorter, they got my housing on Wednesday morning and by 11 AM, I had received a call from their repair department. They started the conversation by asking if I had received the replacement housing. When I confirmed that I had and that it worked great, they told me that they'd call it an even swap. They would keep my housing and I could keep the one they sent. Wow! This is the type of service that legends are made of. For Ike and Ikelite, this is the norm. For me and many others, this type of customer sensitivity makes the differ-

ence between disaster and a great UW photographic experience. Many thanks Ikelite (one more time).

Check it Out on the Web

This is something really cool that I recently read about in the Agressor Fleet newsletter. On the Jim Church website you can listen to a growing number of free podcasts. These are also available on iTunes. I listened to a couple and they are great!. Very educational and easy to listen to. They cover many underwater photography topics both technical and creative. You can listen to them online or download them to listen to them later. Here is the link
http://www.jimchurchphoto.com/podcast_index.html

Where are You Novices???

Last year we only had one digital division for our monthly contests. All levels of photographer were lumped into that one division. We had many novice photographers complain that we didn't have a separate novice category. For 2006 we are now offering a novice division. The only problem is that we are getting very few entries. We have had a couple months where only one person entered the Novice division. What's the problem? Are you shy? Don't have anything suitable for the topics? We really do want more participation in the Novice contest. Start looking at the contest subjects and pick out some images to enter. How can you win if you don't enter?



1st Place Advanced Digital - Mary Lou ReidReid, © 2006

Quick Tip

Don't move. Next time you are on a reef dive try stopping at a nice portion of the reef and stay motionless for a couple minutes. You will be surprised by how many fish come out of the cracks and crevices that were hiding from that big, noisy, bubble bowing monster.

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

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>

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.)

August - Reef Scenes

November - Nudibranches & worms

How to be a Good UW Photographer Part Four - Understanding Exposure

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.

Okay, so you know how to adjust f-stop, shutter speed, ISO and strobe power, but do you really know how all these settings come together to create a proper exposure. To be a successful photographer you MUST have a complete understanding of exposure.

Maybe you think since you shoot digital you can get by with out really understanding f-stop and that other stuff. You just shoot, review image and make some adjustments, shoot again until it looks right. This may get you decent images in some cases, but is far from optimal. Often when approaching shy subjects you only get one shot. In these cases you need to understand exposure. You also have a limited amount of time underwater so being efficient is important.

This information is covered in any instructional photography book, class or website. The principles apply weather it is underwater photography or topside photography. Learn it and it will apply to both.

Monthly Contest Results

May: Colors & Texture

Digital - Advanced

1st - Mary Lou Reid

2nd - Dennis Deavenport

3rd - tie - Mary Lou Reid, D. Lenderman, D. Deavenport

Digital - Novice

1st - Patricia Lin

2nd - Patricia Lin

3rd - Patricia Lin

Slides - Combined

1st - tie - Dennis Deavenport, Mary Lou Reid

2nd - Dennis Vernon

3rd - Jackie Reid

Anemones and Things That Live in Them

That's the topic for our monthly photo contest... anemones and things that live in them. Everyone has photos of anemones or critters that make their homes in an anemone. Be sure to enter them in the June contest. 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.

Karl Dietz at it Again

HUPS member Karl Dietz was recently awarded 1st Place in the Shark division of the EPIC photo contest. He also placed 3rd in the creative division. All the winners can be seen here: <http://www.epicphotocontest.org/Winners/2006%20Winners/sharkwinners.htm> Way to go Karl!

Congrats to Kandace Hiemer

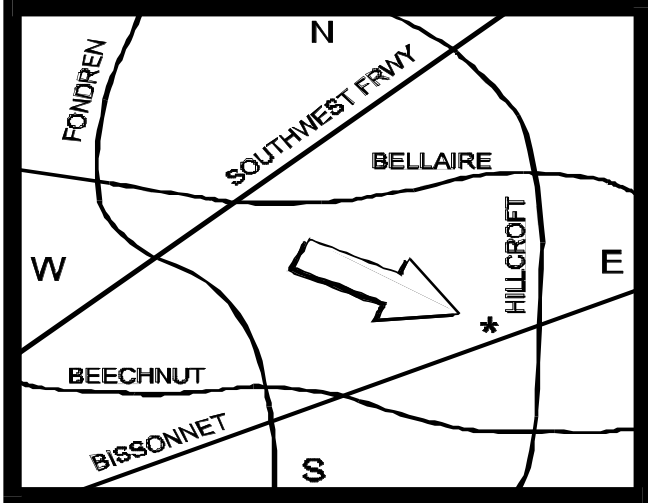
One of Kandace's images was recently selected to be published in Digital Photographer's Special Edition of Digital Pro Photographer issue. Kandace said that HUPS teachings, helpful suggestions and seminars have paid off. The magazine will go on the newstands nationally on May 23. This was the first time she ever submitted anything for a contest or to be considered for publication.

Jesse Cancelmo Signs New Book Deal

With two books already to his credit HUPS member Jesse Cancelmo just signed a contract with Texas A&M Press for a new book titled "Texas Reefs". It will be a hardcover book with approximately 80 photos. Expected release is in fall 2007. For more information on Jesse's work checkout his website <http://www.cancelmophoto.com>

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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