



Quote:

“There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept.”

— Ansel Adams

April Program

Moody Gardens Aquarium & HUPS The Perfect Marriage

Article and Photos by Dennis Deavenport

Since 2010, HUPS has installed annual photo displays at the central atrium of the Moody Gardens’ Aquarium. The displays consist of 32 large prints that are nicely framed and attached to two walls just to the left of where people first enter the Aquarium. One wall has twelve 16” x 20” prints that all have a common theme (i.e., sharks, turtles, etc.). The other wall has twenty 16” x 20” prints that can be on any subject. HUPS has also offered a variety of matted prints for sale in the Moody Gardens gift shop since 2010. Sales during this time have turned a profit of several thousand dollars.

April’s program will be on HUPS’ entire experience with the Aquarium. You’ll see many of the pictures that we’ve installed over the years along with photos and video of the crew that assembled each February or March to change out the exhibit. After each installation, one of the key aquarium employees, Greg Whittaker or Roy Drinnen, has taken us “back stage” to show us how their operation works. This is always a high point of the day since it has given us some “face time” with penguins, rescue turtles, and many other activities necessary to keep the exhibits running smoothly. To finish the day, the group has traditionally headed to the sea-wall to get something to eat and drink while getting to know each other better.

April’s program takes us on a journey through the past 5 years’ involvement with Moody Gardens. Come to the April 7th meeting and see how it all developed and what it has become over the years.



Papua Paradise Resort in Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Article and photos by Ken Knezick



Jungle Symphony – Awakening to the murmur of ocean greeting sand beneath my over-water thatch bungalow, the first view is of pastel dawn reflected upon a placid sea. The water is clear enough to reveal the patch corals and sea grasses where small fish seek shelter as baby sharks learn their trade. Opening my door, the diligent Willy Wag Tail bird reluctantly leaves its nest, allowing me a peek at her two delicate, light amber, brown-flecked eggs. Would that I could describe to you the sights and sounds of the jungle as I traverse the path that crosses the island to the sheltered bay where the dugongs feed.



Platter-sized leaves, fallen to earth, rustle beneath my feet as lizards and skinks scurry aside. I catch only fleeting glimpses of the chorus members, but this jungle is alive with primal songs of birds, frogs and insects. How to decipher, much less describe for you, chirps from squeaks, hoots from whistles, and otherworldly rasps from multipart call-and-response chanting? I step carefully over a long palm frond which has become the bridge for an army of ants on the march. Then an avant-garde avian weighs in with a complex line worthy of John Coltrane. I try to sing it back, in my own key. With their comforting, melodious coos, the doves wait their moment to relax the mood.

Enter the powerful wing beats of an approaching hornbill, its flapping crescendo as distinctive as its wild call. In a place where the bird of paradise still dances its ritual courtship, I've become part of a cross-species symphony with syncopated frog-call percussion. Complex rhythms and overlapping waves of melody, I am spellbound by earth music, for a few moments privy to nature's mysterious cyphers, whispers and dreams.



Contest results		
NOVICE		
1st	Joe Holden	191
2nd	Martin Daniels	173
3rd	John Scheldt	171
4th	David McCracken	119
5th	Beata Lerman	64
INTERMEDIATE		
1st	Debbie Mensay	210
2nd	Bess Bright	196
3rd	Lance Glowacki	194
4th	Jan Baughman	190
5th	0	0
ADVANCED		
1st	Dennis Deavenport	234
2nd	Mike Greuter	184
3rd	Jim Mensay	171
4th	Ken Bean	121
5th	0	0



A Big Thank You & Request

Article and Photo by Alicia Grimes

How do I begin to thank you all for the support and kind words that were bestowed upon me at Greg's memorial service? It really made the day bearable for me to see so many of you at the service and that you took time out of your busy work week to come and remember my favorite dive buddy, Greg. You have no idea how many times during the last two years that Greg would talk about all of the wonderful times we have all had together on dive trips and at all of the workshops that Greg put together.

Please know that he tried his best to get back in the water, the water that he loved so much. This unfortunately was not meant to be. In the month of August, I along with anyone who wants to join me, will be taking Greg's ashes back to the sea. When Greg was cremated I purchased a biodegradable urn that is made from sand; this is what I will be diving with to return him where he was the happiest. The return of his remains will be taken to Puerto Rico along with my friend Silvia's son Fernando. Silvia lost her son 8 month ago from a motorcycle accident and she requested that Greg and Fernando be together.

If anyone is interested in traveling with me please let me know. Again, my sincere thank you and please be patient with me as I try and find myself again and work my way back into HUPS.



News from the Reef

Here is [new video](#) on the Flower Garden Banks by Todd Richard of Baton Rouge.

Excellent work! (30 mins)

Submitted by Jesse Cancelmo

Submitted by Alicia Grimes

[News article](#) concerning the recent oil spill that could have lasting effect on Galveston Bay.

If you find an article that could be important to the group, please send me an email and I will gladly include it in the newsletter. My email address is Alicia@theworldinaflash.com Thanks in advance for sharing.



Panama's Islas Secas Dive Resort

Article by Dr. Brian Fulloch

For the savvy eco-diver, access to the spectrum of Panama Adventure Pacific Diving was once available during the 4 month hiatus when the Coiba Explorer, mother ship to a team of sport fishing boats working the Hannibal Bank, switched to SCUBA as the bill fish action cooled. Divers experienced first hand the delights of swimming with huge schools of snapper, barracuda and jacks over submerged sea mounts and the thrill of relaxing surface intervals beside the tropical rain forest while watching colorful macaws and howler monkeys in the Coiba Island Wildlife Sanctuary. Those divers who enjoyed fishing could use their surface time to troll for the mix of estuarine & blue-water species that inhabited those waters, including wahoo, dorado, greater amberjack and rooster fish. During their season the mournful songs of humpback whales can be heard, individuals visiting the area to calve and breed originating from both the Arctic and Antarctic migration routes.

However, the downturn in international travel after 9-11 put an end to all that, but now those looking for replacement for such excitement will be reassured to learn that two divemasters from the Coiba Explorer are now working out of a new 5-star resort in the Coiba Nature Park area. Kieron Baudains and Kevan Mantell are expatriate Brits, both married to Panamanian girls, whose friendship & dive experience started years ago in Greece. They came to Panama via diving the Bahamas, where Kieron was a party to setting up some of the early shark-dive experiences. Kevan is an active worker for the preservation of Coiba's rich dive inheritance, and when not taking dive groups with Islas Secas donates time working with the World Heritage Organization to establish dive bouy sites and provide protection of the rich local piscine species around the Coiba Island Sanctuary.

The Islas Secas Resort, conceived by Michael Klein as an idyllic tropical get-away for his family & friends has opened access to eco-travelers, many of whom come to relax and enjoy the ambience of unspoiled nature with cordon-bleu cooking served under bayside mango trees. Overhead, "Arnold" (for Schwarzenegger) the male rufus humming bird excitedly protects his spread of feeders against all comers, while magnificent frigate birds, hunting to feed growing chicks on the nearby Isla Cocos nesting colony, wheel overhead to swoop down over surface fish-feeding frenzies wherever they develop. On land, exhausted divers in need of total-body rehab have access to the well-run spa, while the hikers will find carefully marked trails leading to vistas over tidal rocks, the airstrip, a waterfall and an island blow-hole. For the avid birder there is a growing bird list of endemic and migratory species that identifies feathered visitors from both continents.

Diving for smaller groups is run from fast super-pangas powered by twin 140 hp Suzuki 4-stroke motors & holding five tank racks: entry is an easy back-roll off the side and return is by a stern ladder, with the ever attentive boat captain handling the BC. Iced drinks and snacks are available for between dive intervals, while the option of an hour's troll remains for the diver after the excitement of catching a visiting pelagic. At 25 knots most dive sites are a brief 10-30 minutes run, while the nature of the archipelago offers protected dive options whichever the wind direction. Larger groups are handled from a 40ft aluminum catamaran capable of 20 knots, with tank rack and facilities for Nitrox. Eleven dive sites are within 10 minutes of the dock, with fish identified covering a spectrum of Pacific tropicals that would delight any photographic fish collector. Visibility ranges from 40ft below the thermocline to 120 ft in 82 degree surface water. Below thermocline water temperatures may drop 5-10 degrees, but many species seem to hover at the temperature interface making a 60-70 ft dive an attractive choice for big fish observation and wide-angle photography.

Dives at the several seamounts consist of an anchor line descent to find oneself amongst shoals of fish at times so thick that the sunlight is darkened. Great armies of horse-eye jacks and oceanic trigger fish drift slowly across the diver's field of view, showing no fear of bubbles or electronic flash. Bluewater species like rainbow runners drift unconcernedly among the teeming hordes, while on a memorable off-gassing stop at 15 feet the astonished divers were able to identify a passing marlin, which flashed iridescent blue stripes of excitement as it switched into a high gear departure. Shoals of schooling barracuda or sennet form lazy circles above, giving the diving photographer opportunities for the chance shot of a lifetime. Divers need to remain wary as mingled among the rocks of the seamount are numerous stone fish, virtually invisible until one spots the great dark eye that leads to recognition of its owner. Rock cracks are populated by four different color variants of moray eel, ranging from the smaller jeweled, the chainmail and the zebra to giant green morays, at times free ranging in their search for food. One seamount dive occurred just after the full moon of the spring equinox, and divers were astonished to see a large shoal of Cubera snapper mingling over the rock surface then making group forays to the surface as each fish released clouds of milt and eggs in a group spawning exercise, the released ovae, now fertilized drifted off to join particles of plankton until they would later hatch into shoals of tiny fish sheltering in crevasses of the reef.



At the Montuosa seamount a pair of Harlequin shrimp danced mischievously in front of a photographer who was frantically trying to maintain focus as the surge moved him several feet backwards & forwards. Blennies and gobies peered out of hides in the rock while a juvenile rock-grabber wrasse, disguised as a piece of floating seaweed and looking nothing like its parents, drifted among the sand & rocks in the current. The careful observer found clinging to the rocks several color variants of nudibranch, the commonest being a full three inches in length, dressed in white with black fringe lines and dark external gills. Under larger rocks were Pacific white-tip sharks, resting after a hectic night's feeding, one had the swollen abdomen of a female about to give birth to her clutch of live pups. Half submerged in the sand was a large Diamond Sting ray, fully 6 feet across, its eyes following each move of the divers passing by.

A 30 minute boat ride leads to a seamount situated 1.4 miles from the Island of Contreras. Nicknamed the "Rollercoaster" the rock rises abruptly from a 300ft sandy bottom to 30 ft from the surface. Divers submerge slowly to huge schools of fish at a popular cleaning station, with large numbers of butterfly fish and king angels, while large groups of Spotted Eagle and Devil/Manta rays cruise slowly by. The abundance of food attracts several species of shark including Tiger, Bull and Pacific White-tip. Careful observation yields sight of frog fish, hawk fish and several smaller rock cod species, while blue damsel fish swim fussily about guarding their rockbound nests of eggs.

La Bruja (The Witch) is a rock lying 2 miles East of the Secas and stands on its own surrounded by deeper water. The principle rock is almost submerged at extreme high water, while below other rocks form irregular channels of rock and sand in terraces. The Western side drops off quickly to 130ft with several smaller rock pinnacles, while the Eastern side forms a natural amphitheater with sandy areas inhabited by numerous guitar sharks, which lie dormant on the seabed waiting for their next meal. An extensive rock pile runs off to the East, home to many schools of fish and reef creatures. Schooling jacks and barracuda hover over the site, while several cleaning stations North of the Rock attract sea turtles, Manta rays and Pacific Spade fish. In the deeper waters off the rock pile Sea Pens can be found extending from the sandy/rock rubble seafloor.

Punta Pargo lies South of the Islands out of any protection from wave action. The pinnacle is separated from an underwater ridge that runs from a small island and is surrounded by a sandy floor at 130ft. A descent of 70ft is needed to the shallowest point, and surge & current is common at this site, but the rewards are a gathering of marine nutrients that attracts a great diversity of marine life. Schools of rays are common here, as are several species of snapper, including the giant Cubera and mullet snapper. White tip reef shark are common while the occasional Bull and Galapagos shark cruise the area. Hard and soft corals are seen in profusion, with sponges and sea fans sheltering a great variety of smaller reef dwellers.

The Circus lies within the confines of the Secas Islands and hence enjoys some protection from wave action and current. A short descent of 30 ft leads to two main rocks 130ft apart that are linked by a shallow sand and rock valley. Here there is an abundance of hard and soft corals, large rocks form overhangs with small caves, perfect habitat for Cubera snapper and Reef White Tip sharks. It is a popular site for marine turtles and holds an abundance of smaller reef fishes, including large schools of butterfly fish, and Sargent major. The area is a gold mine for macro photography.

Lemon Rock—normally well sheltered by the Islands from wave & current action, Lemon Rock is a short 20ft descent to a submerged rock pile that descends off to its maximum depth to the East. There is a variety of hard & soft corals in shallow water frequented by numerous marine turtles, schooling grunts and spade fish. On the sandy bottom a careful approach will yield good views of Ornate Jaw fish, octopus, lobster and a variety of blennies. Various cleaning stations stretch over the rocky slopes with cleaning wrasses, butterfly and King Angel fish.

Food:

Besides the luxury Spa perhaps the most wife-pleasing aspect of a stay at the Islas Secas Resort is the focus on exceptional Cor-don Bleu cooking.

Breakfasts are served al fresco under a large mango tree and featured a several item menu with choices including: huevos rancheros, "typical Panamanian" – (omelette, spicy beef tips and fried plantain), cheese omelette with your choice of cheese, and cold cereals while fruit plates featured delicious maracuya (Granadilla/Passion Fruit), mango, melon and sliced papaya.

Featured lunch & dinner menus were sufficiently memorable to be listed individually, they could read from a top 3 star Michelin Guide French Restaurant, while followers of Disney's delightful little action film "Ratatouille" would recognize these art forms:

* Day 1– Lunch: diced octopus cocktail followed by baked dorado in 5 spices sauce and for dessert of tropical fruits. Dinner: orange salad followed by pork fillet stuffed with prunes and raisins and a dessert of Lemon Tart.

*Day 2– Lunch: passion fruit ceviche in a bed of tostones followed by fish balls with feta cheese and almond rice with dessert of fruit parfait. Dinner: ratatouille followed by filet mignon and baby carrots & sweet beans in chef's special sauce



Panama's Islas Secas Dive Resort Continued

- *Day 3– Lunch: green salad in dry tomato pesto followed by oven baked snapper in a bed of potatoes and for dessert Island home made strawberry ice cream. Dinner: vegetable timbale with tofu followed by Kebabs stuffed with mushroom, eggplant and zucchini and a sweet of Cranberry Present for dessert.
- *Day 4–Picnic lunch: pita pocket sandwiches with a delicious baked fish filling while diving at Montuosa Island seamount. Dinner: Fusion Carimanolas breaded with Japanese panko, then grouper in orange sauce with trio puree of cauliflower, broccoli and potato, and a sweet of chocolate mousse for dessert.
- *Day 5–Lunch: corn & broccoli velouté, followed by rack of pork on a bed of sweet onion base with sautéed vegetables and for dessert of crumble with home made coffee ice cream. Dinner: Thai salad with calamari, then garlic Jumbo Shrimp with rice pilaf and dessert of Oreo Cheese cake.
- *Day 6– Lunch: Peruvian cerviche followed by snapper in sauce de maison with vegetables and dessert of Kiwi sorbet. Dinner: salmon tartar topped with red caviar, steakstuffed with Portobello mushroom sauce and spring fettucini and for dessert pears in a white wine caramel sauce.
- *Departure day 7– Island Cesar Salad with chopped baked fish in a chef's own Island Cesar dressing.

Transport to the Islas Secas Resort is organized via an agent States-side with a 3–1/3rd hr flight to Panama City from Houston or Miami, then the option of a 1–1/2 hr charter flight for groups direct to the Island airstrip, or a 1–1/4 hr connection to the town of David then choice of charter helicopter to the island or a 1hr 40min trip down the river delta and across to the island jetty in fast super-panga.

(Not to be published)

Author: Dr Brian Tulloch grew up in Africa, trained at Oxford University, United Kingdom and now lives in Houston. He is a practicing Clinical Endocrinologist (that's medical issues to do with Sex, Sugar and Salt) and is a much-invited lecturer in related Medical topics. He has dived World-wide since 1987, and is a periodic broadcaster and lay speaker in Marine Survival, Wildlife and Outdoor fields. When not diving he races sailboats, (his daughter is the featured girl sailor in the Disney sailing film "Morning Light" and is on this year's Olympic sailing team.) and has a Coastguard Captains license which has him fishing the Texas Gulf Coast Offshore.





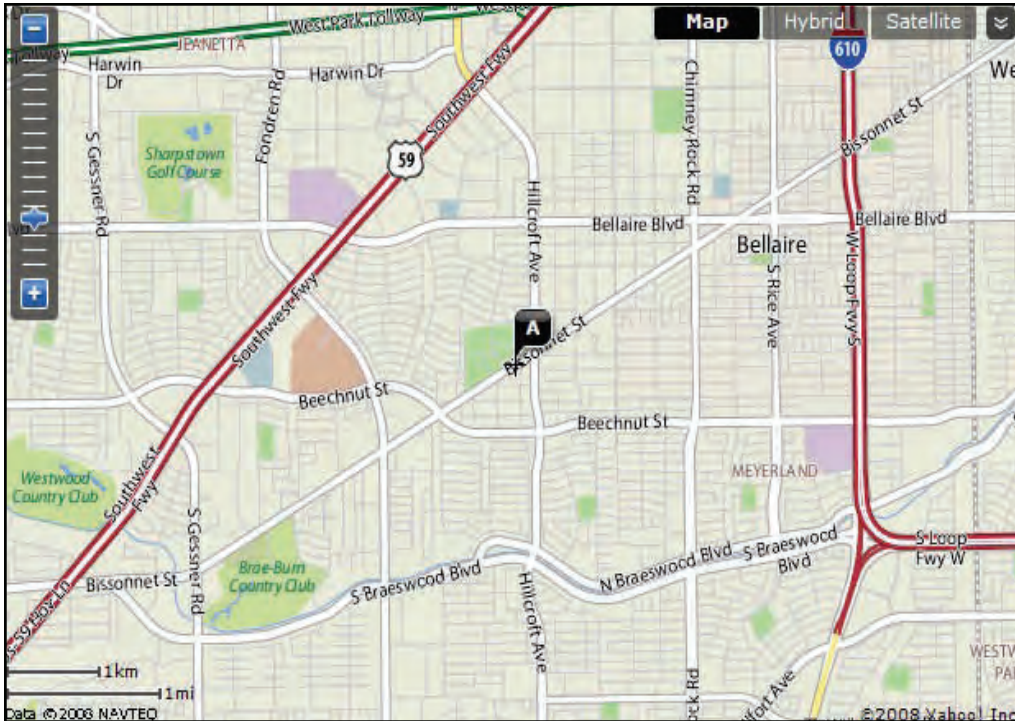
2014 Meetings

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	Tom Collier	HUPS & Moody Gardens—The Perfect Marriage	Large swimmers (> 4 feet) - not people
May	5th	Greg Whittaker	" Life in a Pyramid "	Banded/Stripes
June	2nd	Beata Lerman	Coast to Coast with Berta Lerman	Big eyes, Tangs, Triggerfish, Boxfish
July	7th	Ken Knezick	" From the Reef Scenes to Whale Sharks – Simple Steps to Successful Wide – Angle Underwater Photography "	Reef scenes without diver
August	4th	HUPS Videographers	A Night at the Movies	Scorpion fish, Gurnards, Lionfish
September	1st	Mike Greuter	Saba & Dominica on the Half-Shell	Pairs or buddies
October	6th	Monica Losey	TBA	Anemones and relatives, Hydroids, Jellyfish
November	3rd	Anilao Trip Participants	Anilao, The Philippines Club Trip	Single Color focus (Blue, Red, Green, Yellow)
December	1st	None	Food, festivities and Best of HUPS	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>



<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?%23!group.php?gid=174168478778>

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