

PARADISE Dive Club

December 2004

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Volume 10, Issue 12



President's Log

by Ray Janik

Every president knows he or she will face numerous challenges during a term. For the PDC, the president's first hurdle is the somewhat infamous Pumpkin Carving Contest, which, for the last few years, has featured rough weather and near-zero visibility. So it was with no small amount of trepidation that I found myself on Goleta Beach with a dozen or so club members and maybe half as many divers from UCSB ready to take the plunge.

I was hoping I could follow in the footsteps of my predecessors and lead the club to victory (or at least ride the coattails of a artistically inclined PDCer to a win for our side). I'm pleased to report that our own Mark Rogers took first place for the second year in a row. In fact, despite stiff—and extremely creative—competition from several UCSB divers, PDC swept the top three places! As president I, of course, take full credit.

Conditions were much better than they have been for the last couple of years, and as I was hovering just off the bottom, hacking away at my pumpkin, I was struck by two thoughts: First, I was pretty sure this was one of the sillier things I've ever done. Second, it was a lot of fun. For most of my dive, I kept company with a juvenile halibut who darted in and nibbled at every flake of pumpkin and then spat it out, repeating the same sequence over and over again.

So, as the year winds down, we'll try for a similar experience in December. Several of us noticed an excess of golf balls offshore at Goleta Beach, so we'll return for a dive to round them up. I have no idea if they pose any sort of environmental hazard—and I've never been able to understand the thrill of whacking golf balls into the ocean—but it certainly can't hurt to clean them up. We'll have a prize for the diver who collects the most, some eats, and, I would imagine, plenty of free balls for the golfers in the club.

Of course, the big event of December takes place on dry land. Our holiday party will be on the 12th. We'll have great food, our infamous gift exchange, and, if rumors can be believed, Scuba Claus himself will be making an appearance. Be sure to see the additional information in this newsletter, and check your e-mail for an invite. See you there.



The pumpkin lineup—photo by Stacey Janik

Join the club, enjoy the benefits

- ∅ Monthly meetings with entertainment
- ∅ Raffle prizes (who doesn't like prizes?)
- ∅ Great dive buddy pool
- ∅ Beach & boat dives, including weekly night dives
- ∅ Club BBQs & other activities
- ∅ Free airfills & gear discounts at local dive shops
- ∅ Right to proudly wear the official PDC t-shirt (because we do have the coolest logo)

Mark your calendars...

We meet on the last Tuesday of the month

Rusty's Pizza

(in the lighthouse)

10 East Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara, CA

6:30 pm - social hour

7-8:30 pm - feeding frenzy, meeting,
raffle prizes, entertainment

Great Pumpkins—article by Beth Gwinn, photos by Stacey Janik

Startled beachgoers watched more than a dozen PDC and UCSB divers stride into the surf, pumpkins in hand, for the annual Underwater Pumpkin Carving Contest at Goleta Beach. Members of this strange vegetable cult spent up to an hour bubbling away as they hacked their gourds into some pretty amazing jack-o-lanterns. Thanks to the good taste of the passersby who were asked to pick the winners, the PDC made a clean sweep of the prizes. Our judges were a British couple who were strolling the beach. They're probably still telling their pub mates about the quaint California custom of underwater pumpkin carving.



PDC's star carver Mark Rogers won top prize for the second year running. He created a rendition of Lola, the animated fish star. Her beautiful locks of slimy green hair shriveled a little in the sun, but she was still one fine lady. Second prize went to the pumpkin shark attack victim, complete with embedded teeth, carved by Craig. Carl Gwinn won third prize for an octopus pumpkin, despite the handicap of a self-inflicted underwater stab wound in the thumb, which must have made carving a little painful. Good thing that Craig's shark was busy elsewhere. Despite his troubled past with knives, Mark Silva did not slice, rice, or dice himself while carving his pumpkin creation, which had shell eyes. The really nifty shark pumpkin carved by UCSB club president Thomas Welche, a student in Milton Love's lab, was a popular favorite. Thanks to our generous sponsors, all of the winning pumpkin carvers and several other drawing winners received very nice prizes.



Paradise Dive Club Officers

President - Ray Janik	637-4486
Vice President - Dan Lindsay	964-5020
Secretary - Carl Gwinn	968-5694
Treasurer - Mark Silva	969-2014
Membership - Bruce King	452-7590
Newsletter - Stacey Janik	637-4487
Sgt at Arms - Steve Trainoff	571-1622
Entertainment - Mark Bursek	564-1923
Raffle - Ralph Goldsen	681-0400
Webmaster - Ray Janik	637-4486
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Sponsors:

Anacapa Dive Center	963-8917
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Visit our Web site at
<http://kelp.chem.ucsb.edu>

E-mail newsletter articles to
sjanik@gmail.com

Membership: \$30/year (May-April); \$25/year for renewing members. Includes monthly newsletter. A complimentary subscription will be provided to dive clubs that reciprocate with a subscription to their newsletter; contact the membership coordinator at kingbh@cox.net for details.



The Braille-like dive conditions at the 2003 Halloween carve-in famously resulted in a deformed pumpkin with eyes and mouth on opposite sides. This year the giant sand-moving equipment was gone, and we got really nice visibility. Several of us enjoyed a beautiful dive along the pipeline after the carving was over. I had always wondered why people got excited about diving along a big sewer pipe, but it really is impressive—and unrecognizable as a pipe due to its covering of boulders. (The effluent exits about 1 mile out, by the way). It was fun to watch all those care-free little lobsters waggling their feelers! Maybe they'll be legal next year.

Besides the brave folks who came to carve, a whole bunch of PDCers turned out to enjoy the beach on a beautiful October day. We all had an excellent barbecue feast, in the best Silva style, and had fun shooting the breeze and watching the kids play on the beach.



Thanks to our members' artistic talents, the PDC gets to enjoy another year with the Pumpkin Plaque, while UCSB plots its challenge for 2005. Come help us defend our championship next year!



The Search for the Elusive Green Moray: A Trip to the Sea of Cortez

article & photos by Dave Burroughs

Last August Patty Bryant and I were members of an expedition to the Sea of Cortez led by local diving legend E. J. Stetson. The purpose of this expedition was to observe the rare and elusive green moray.



Now some might think that an expedition would be better aimed at the legendary “Señor Big” of the Gulf of California. Creatures such as hammerhead sharks, marlin, sea lions, whales, sailfish, and of course whale sharks. But we knew better. The real goal of any trip to Baja should be to look for green moray eels.

We started our trip out of La Paz, Mexico. The first two days were on *Baja Expedition's* fast pangas. Our divemaster was our favorite of many trips, the beautiful Josie. The first day we went to La Reyna and Suwannee reef. La Reyna is famous for schooling manta rays. We saw none there that day, though we did see many large schools of sharks and the wreck of an airplane. We then traveled to Suwannee reef. This may be the most beautiful dive in the Sea of Cortez, and we saw it under ideal conditions. Though we didn't find the green morays that were our goal, we did see a school of what could only be described as a million (the American meaning, not the British one) fish. The reef was beautiful with many corals and numerous types of colorful small morays.



The second day we traveled to El Bajo, a famous seamount far out from La Paz. The trip had an excellent beginning when we spotted and observed a fin whale for some time on the way to the site. El Bajo had its usual clear and warm water. Only one hammerhead was seen, though a marlin and sailfish were seen together—by Patty, I believe. We did have immediate luck with the main goal of our trip, as a number of nice green morays were seen on the seamount.

The third day we began our six-day trip on the *Don Jose*. The *Don Jose* is a classic old dive boat. Made out of wood, the boat is comfortable and slow. But as you are on *manaña* time, this is of little importance. The diving is mostly done from several small pangas. They maintain adequate stocks of cold beer. Electrolyte replacement is essential during the Sea of Cortez summer.

We started our trip at Los Islotes. Here is the classic sea lion rookery. The sea lions are numerous and more than willing to come right up to you. All got their fill. We did manage to find a number of the rumored green morays.



Next day: Las Animas.

Plenty of current to work off all the great meals we had on the *Don Jose*. Huge schools of big-eye jacks. Turtles and guitarfish were also present. Unfortunately no Elvis fish were observed. A few green morays as well.

Back at El Bajo the next day. Only one of the hammerheads it is famous for, but we did find plenty of green morays!! One crevasse had maybe twenty to thirty. All were ecstatic!



We then returned to La Reyna and Suwannee reef. Conditions had deteriorated but Suwannee reef was still great. Saw the garden eels out in the sand. Many small morays and the largest scorpionfish ever recorded.

Upon our return to La Paz, we engaged in Ed's personal quest. Ed has two passions. One is fishing for tuna. The second is the hunt for the perfect large margarita. Now those who have been to La Paz before will remember Ed's private restaurant on the water, La Goleta, aka "Eduardo's." Unfortunately, the last hurricane had sent this restaurant to the annals of history. The stones of its foundation now make up the floor of Ed's garage.

I am pleased to report that on the evening of our return, Ed's quest was fulfilled at a local hotel. Patty turned out to be a connoisseur of the margarita as well. No one was in any condition to remember the name of the hotel.

(For more photos, see <http://homepage.mac.com/daveburroughs/Menu15.html>)



The elusive green moray of Baja

Steve's Photoshop Adventures

article & photos by Steve Trainoff

Underwater photography is hard—really hard. Not only are you moving, your subject is moving too. The sunlight is filtered to progressive blueness as you descend. Unless you like images that are blue on blue on blue, you either stay shallow or you need a strobe to add the colors back. You have to balance foreground flash exposure with background exposure. You have to handle a box, with awkward appendages, that is studded with more buttons than the cockpit of a 747. The image in the viewfinder looks small and remote though the multiple layers of glass, plastic, and water. To top all of this off, you have the most incredible scenery and you CAN NOT lose track of the time, depth, and remaining air. Whew! It is a miracle that anyone ever gets a decent image underwater. But no, there are magazines filled with incredible, vibrant colors and images that are so achingly well composed that they make your heart skip a beat.

Q: How do the pros do it? A: Photoshop. I am only half kidding. Mostly they spend years perfecting their trade, but even the experts run into a quandary. What do you do with that image of the rare fish that is very well exposed, but not so well composed? Being a novice, I run into that quandary more than most. For example, take the image below of a leaf scorpionfish that I took on a recent trip to Fiji. He is in there somewhere, but this image is more like “Where’s Waldo” than a piece of underwater art.



Figure 1. Original image. Exposure and focus are fine, but the poor scorpionfish is lost in the coral...

my Photoshop skills. I decided to darken and progressively blur the background, while leaving the scorpionfish untouched. Here is the basic procedure. First, select the fish using the “magic wand” and the edge finder selection tools. To keep the edges from becoming “harsh,” I used the feather tool to give a soft edge to the selection.

Next I made a copy of the image, darkened it by using the brightness control, and blurred it using a Gaussian filter. The idea is that this will be blended with the original image using a blending mask.

The mask is a grayscale image that is used to control the transparency of another image. Where the mask is white, the new image, in this case, the blurred replicate, is opaque and covers what is underneath it (the original image). Where the mask is black, the blurred replicate is transparent and the original image below it shows through. To make the mask, I started with a linear gradient from



Figure 3. Darkened and blurred replicate

What to do? I solicited advice from the helpful people on the Web site www.digitaldiver.com. You can go a long way by just cropping out some of the distracting coral in the background so that the scorpionfish fills more of the frame. But based on the advice I received from the Web site, I decided to be more adventurous and exercise



Figure 2. Cutting out the fish.

top to bottom. The net result is that the top of the composite image is blurred, and the bottom is in focus. This makes it look like the coral at the top is far away and is fading into the background. Finally, I used the dodge and burn brushes to selectively adjust the mask to blur out areas around the fish, so that there is good contrast between the fish, which is in focus, and the coral right around him, which is out of focus. The resulting mask is shown in Figure 4 below. When the mask is applied to the blurred replicate, the effect is shown in Figure 5.

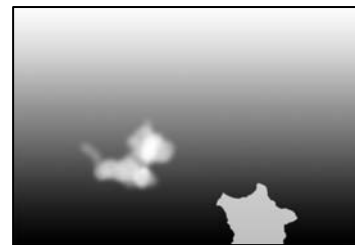


Figure 4. Blending mask



Figure 5. Combination of blur mask and blurred background.

Finally, I turned on the bottom layer, which is the original image, and the top layer, which is the fish I cut out in the first step to. The final image is shown below. I also added the copyright notice in case any netsurfing magazine editor spots my creation and decides to put it on the cover of *Scuba Today*™. ☺



Figure 6. Voila! The finished product.

At this point some people cry foul. After all, the “image” isn’t what was really out there. It looks like he is on a coral outcropping that is far removed from the background. This might misrepresent the scorpionfish’s behavior.

To the critics, I plead that my goal is to produce beautiful images, not necessarily “accurate” ones. I feel that as long as there are no misrepresentations about the fact that this image was “manipulated,” it can stand on its own as a work of art. Historically, all of the early great photographers heavily manipulated their images in the darkroom. It was not until the advent of commercial processing, where most people were forced to accept what came from the lab, without editing, that it became accepted that a photographic image was supposed to represent “truth.” What image manipulation programs really do is give modern photographers the same (or greater) control over their images that the pioneers had. If the result is that there are more “beautiful” images in the world, so much the better. In addition, if it were not for Photoshop, this image would have been relegated to the bit bucket. I think it is exciting to turn the original *blab* into something with pizzazz.

(To see these images in all their glory, visit <http://members.cox.net/stevenandgretchen/Fiji%202004/PhotoshopFiddling.html>, or you can read the newsletter online at the PDC Web site, <http://kelp.chem.ucsb.edu>.)

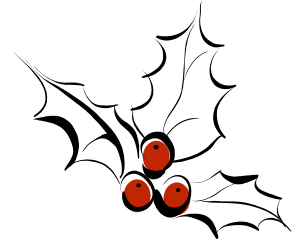
PDC Holiday Party

It's almost time for everyone's favorite event of the year...

When: Sunday, December 12, beginning at 3pm

Where: Steve & Gretchen Trainoff's clubhouse (Evite with directions coming soon)

Cost: \$12/person—families are welcome, kids 12 & under are free



Master party planner Kay Silva will once again be overseeing the feast; Mark Bursek has volunteered two turkeys, and Patty's bringing ham. Appetizers, side dishes, and desserts are potluck; we'll have a sign-up sheet at the November meeting, or you can call Dan at 964-5020 to see what's needed.

Kitchen facilities at the clubhouse are extremely limited, so please bring all dishes ready to serve. Soft drinks will be provided—if you prefer something more “spirited,” BYOB.

We'll be having our traditional white elephant gift exchange; participation is voluntary, and the target price/value for gifts is around \$10. We anticipate a special visit from Scuba Claus for the kids.

If you can spare some time to help with decorations, set-up, or clean-up, please contact Dan at 964-5020 or edgy01@aol.com. Please also let him know if you have lawn chairs, folding tables, space heaters, or decorations you'd be willing to lend for the party. Thanks in advance to Kay, to the Trainoffs, and to all our volunteers!

18 Holes With a Tank?

by Dan Lindsay

The only resemblance to 18 anything is the date—the 18th of December (Saturday). We're going to go golfing underwater, sort of, on the 18th. While everyone else in the country is kick starting their snow blowers, we'll be heading to Goleta Beach for a golf ball scavenger hunt. The diver who returns with the most golf balls wins!

We'll meet at 11:00 a.m. to comb the bottom around the Goleta pier for golf balls. What does the winner get? Aside from lots of special attention and kudos from the rest of the dive club—well, we're not sure yet. But do you really need an excuse to get in the water?

We'll meet at the usual place on Goleta Beach. Bring a suitable mesh bag to collect them. Fore!

Newsletter Contributors Contest

All club members who submitted articles or photos to the newsletter this year while not serving on the board are eligible for one raffle ticket per entry; drawing will be held at the December 12 holiday party.

Thanks to everyone who made our newsletter informative and fun to read this year!


John Beltranena	Michael O'Connell
Barbara Brown	Jesse Rogers (2)
Dave Burroughs (6)	Andre Terroux
Beth Gwinn	Steve Trainoff
Carl Gwinn (3)	Jerry Sorich (3)
Joshua James (2)	Cheryl Weakliem (3)
Ken James	Paul Weakliem (4)
James Libhart (2)	

Bulletin Board

- Open boat dive: Sunday, December 12 on the *Peace*, 7am departure, \$95. Call Anacapa Dive Center, 963-8917.
- Sport fishery for lingcod is now closed in all waters statewide, at all depths and to all methods of take (including boat-based anglers, shore-based anglers and divers), from 11/1-12/31/04.
- Reminder for abalone divers! Now that ab season is over for 2004, you need to send in your abalone “report card” to DFG. The address is on the card. Do it right now, before you forget! (Thanks to Paul Weakliem for this & the above update.)

December 2004

Don't forget...
MONTHLY MEETING
November 30
 at Rusty's Pizza
No December meeting!!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Holiday party 	13	14	15	16	17	18 Golf ball hunt @ Goleta Beach
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Night Dives

Upcoming Events

- December 12: holiday party, 3pm
- December 18: Goleta Beach dive/golf ball scavenger hunt, 11am
- *Happy Holidays!*
 (remember, no club meeting in December)

Wednesday night dives: To find out where the group is diving or to be added to the night dive e-mail list, contact Dan Lindsay at edgy01@aol.com or 964-5020.



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