



MARTIN DIVE CLUB News



November 2002

November Meeting

2002 Photo Contest Results

Come see the 'best of our best' photographers at our November 12th meeting. Mike McCleskey, our Camera Guy, will show us who shot what and with what results.

This year's annual **MDC** Photo Contest has yielded some excellent work! A total of 61 photos were submitted from fourteen members, including three first-time entrants. Each of the ten possible categories were filled, so there's lots of heated competition.

This year the photos were judged by John Durham from our sister club, the KSC Barracudas. John was a charter member of the Barracudas in 1964 and has been an active member ever since. He served as an instructor for many years when the Barracudas offered certification courses and is responsible for introducing hundreds of new divers to our sport.

John has been an award-winning underwater photographer who in more recent years has traded in his still camera for underwater video. He presented some of his beautiful video work to the **Martin Dive Club** in the past. He regularly judges the Barracuda's photo contest, and we are fortunate that he was happy to judge ours as well.



John commented that he was absolutely amazed at the number of photographers and entries in our contest, and he was very impressed with the overall high quality of the photos in the contest.

Mark your calendar and plan to come out to see the beautiful photos and congratulate the talented winners on Tuesday.

Mike McCleskey



We'll be gathering and mingling at around 6:30 p.m., with the evening's presentation beginning at 7:00 p.m. Afterwards at about 7:30, we hold our "formal" meeting covering **CLUB** business and member trip reports, followed by door prizes and our fantastic "50-50" raffle.



We meet at the Big Apple Buffet, which is located at 198 S. Semoran Blvd (SR 436) in Orlando [phone (407) 382-7220]. It's just north of SR 408 (the East-West Expressway) on the west side of SR 436, behind the Sonic Burger drive-in restaurant. The price is \$9.49 for the regular buffet (including sushi) and \$11.99 if you want crab legs, clams, and oysters. There are tons of things on the buffet - Mongolian barbecue, Oriental, fried chicken, and Italian, along with salads and dessert!

President's Column

Hello Fellow Divers!!

For our October meeting, the **MDC** heard from Phil Merchant owner of Wet-N-Fla Scuba in Longwood regarding "off-season" diving and gear preparation plus information on further certification in diving. It was an informative meeting.

Mike McCleskey talked of our diving adventures on the Nekton Rorqual last month and also his SeaWorld encounter on the Shark Dive now being offered.

For our November meeting, we will have the results for our **CLUB's** Annual Photo Contest. We will be seeing all the pictures and slides entered in all the categories. The winners will be announced that evening.

I hope you will attend the November 12th meeting and see the winning pictures. Remember, we will be having a holiday party this year at Dubsdread, Sunday, December 8th. We will not be having a regular dive meeting for the month of December.

See you November 12th!!,
Marie Frank

'Off-Season' Dive Activities, Phil Merchant, Wet-N-Fla Scuba

We heard about off-season dive activities at our October 8th meeting. Phil Merchant, owner of Wet-N-Fla Scuba in Longwood, gave us his thoughts on things you can do in the cooler months to enhance your SCUBA life year-round.

Phil learned to dive in 1982, started working in the dive industry in 1990, became a NAUI dive instructor in 1993, moved to Orlando in 1994 to manage Jim Hollis Scuba



World, opened Wet-N-Fla Scuba in 1996, and became an Instructor Trainer in 1997. His latest achievement was becoming a Course Director for NAUI this year. This is the highest Instructor level a person can hold in NAUI in the recreational side.

Phil told us about some of the many things you can do to continue your quest for knowledge in diving even though it is starting to become winter (if you can call what we have winter). He led a brief discussion about courses like Nitrox, CPR,

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Your Officers and Staff

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Come to Our Holiday Party!

*We will celebrate our annual Holiday Party
on Sunday, December 8th at Dubsdread.*

Cost is \$20 per person.

For reservations and more info call Marie Frank at (407) 356-8256

*We will also have another exciting gift exchange. Each person
should bring a wrapped gift worth around \$10 (really!).*

Suggested gift items: fish or critter-related, SCUBA, or gag gift.

Hint: Give a gift you would like to receive.

*Our party will take place at Dubsdread Golf Club,
549 West Par Street, Orlando, (407) 246-2551.*

This will be an entertaining and fun evening.

The party starts at 6:30 PM with dinner at 7:00 PM

Call Marie early, attendance is limited!



SHARK !!!!!

Fins to the left, fins to the right . . . but I sure didn't feel like bait.

Five members of the **Martin Dive Club** were fortunate enough to be among the guests of honor at the grand opening of SeaWorld Orlando's newest attraction, Sharks Deep Dive. Imagine having the opportunity to be submerged in a shark tank on scuba gear in SeaWorld's Shark Encounter exhibit, sharing the water with almost 100 sharks! There are Sand Tigers, Blacktips, Browns, Leopards, and Nurse Sharks. There is also a healthy population of Goliath Groupers, small reef fish, and (one of the coolest species) sawfish cruising around.

The date was the 3rd of October and the event was the introduction to the press of this new ride. Through a complicated stroke of luck, the wonderful Marketing staff at SeaWorld had invited me, my wife, Wendy, and son, Torey (age 10), to be part of the "guinea pig" group - the first outsiders to swim with the sharks (both those in the exhibit AND those with the cameras and microphones) to be interviewed by the press. Also in attendance were Phil and Grace Hampton, fellow MDC members; Phil Stasik and Beth Shaffer, the president and vice president of the KSC Barracudas Club; diving legends Hal and Scarlet Watts; and two dive operators from the Florida Keys.

The program includes an educational portion (I learned many new and interesting facts about sharks) and a 30 minute ride in a 2-man shark cage that travels very slowly along the back wall of the Shark Encounter aquarium. The dive, which can also be done with snorkel, is accomplished without fins, BC, or scuba rig. They have permanently mounted tanks with long "Hooka rig" second stages to breathe from. The divers just don their wetsuits, strap on enough weight to keep them on the 8-foot-square bottom of the cage, and hop in. The stainless steel mesh cage has a 1-foot-high window of Lexan all the way around the perimeter, which is completely invisible underwater, that gives divers the feeling that there is nothing between them and the sharks (I repeatedly bumped my face on this Lexan when craning my neck for a closer view). The tank

inhabitants swim within inches of the window, occasionally rubbing along the side!

Having dived with many sharks in the wild over the years, I found this to be especially interesting because of how close and how relaxed the sharks were (not to mention how relaxed divers can be inside the safety of the cage). It gives the opportunity to study in detail the physical makeup of the sharks - their teeth, electro-receptors in the nose, lateral line - which normally gets lost in the excitement of an open water dive.

After our diving adventure, we were invited to dine in the newly opened gourmet restaurant that surrounds the tank. The food was excellent and beautifully presented. If you get a chance to visit

the restaurant, make sure you check out the lounge area - the bar is actually an aquarium with all sorts of exotic tropicals swimming around under your drinks.



Given the opportunity, I would definitely do this again and I encourage all divers to check it out. Not only is it amazing to get so

close to the sharks, but getting the "behind the scenes" look at the way the exhibit works and talking with the SeaWorld curators is fascinating. All in all, this was a great day, and I am indebted to the wonderful people at SeaWorld for giving me and my family the chance to experience Sharks Deep Dive. Come out to the next meeting to see photos and video of the event.

Mike McCleskey



Dogfish

MARTIN DIVE CLUB 'News'

Get eye to eye with sharks

SeaWorld exhibit dunks visitors into fin-filled aquarium

By Breuse Hickman
FLORIDA TODAY



There's a television commercial in which an SUV winds up submerged in the ocean where gangs of teeth-bearing sharks attack it. Of course, the message here is nothing -- even the most vicious of creatures -- can tamper with the almighty force that is the SUV.

But underneath such bubbling pomposity is a stereotype Gary Violetta would like to put to rest. Recent news reports notwithstanding, sharks are not the blood-thirsty predators of folklore and blockbuster movies. The statistics still stand: You are more likely to get struck by lightning than get attacked by a shark. Violetta, curator of fishes at SeaWorld Orlando, is so sure of this, he wants the common folk to meet sawfish and sand tiger sharks face to face at the park's Shark Encounter.

Sharks Deep Dive, the latest attraction at SeaWorld, allows two visitors at a time to gear up in wetsuits and enter a cage that is then submerged into 78-degree water at the theme park's Shark Encounter. Visitors are then pulled along a track that runs the length of the 125-foot aquarium.

For about 30 minutes, they view, up close, more than 50 sharks while diners at the new Sharks Underwater Grill restaurant watch.



Such an opportunity is too good to pass up, even for expert divers such as Phil Hampton, who has swum among sharks without the safety of a cage.

MARTIN DIVE CLUB 'News'



The former Merritt Island resident was among a few other members of the KSC Baracudas Dive Club who recently took the plunge at SeaWorld.

"It's not often that you get so close to a shark's set of teeth," said Hampton, 71, who is retired from Kennedy Space Center and has been diving for 25 years. "I got so close to the sawfish I felt like I could touch it."

Sharks Deep Dive -- the latest phase in SeaWorld's shark educational program begun about 25 years ago -- was built in response to the success of other hands-on attractions at the park.

"We've noticed over the years, what people really remember is getting to touch the dolphin," said Violetta, adding that the park's adjacent Discovery Cove has been successful at forging such interaction. Violetta said he hopes the exhibit -- though limited to only 12 people a day -- will continue to help educate the public about the behavior of misunderstood creatures.

"We have definitely come a long way in our thinking during the last 25 years," Violetta said. "Where the message used to be, 'just shoot the damn things,' awareness has shifted."

The program is \$125 for snorklers, but certified divers can rent scuba equipment for \$25 more. The price includes two days' admission to the park, a souvenir T-shirt and a booklet about sharks.

Alternate Kicks

Fins all a-flutter? Sometimes it's good to have an option.

The scissors kick

Use the scissors kick when swimming on your side so you can assist another diver, watch an instructor, or look at a wall or wreck as you swim by it. It's also a good stroke for relieving a muscle cramped while flutter kicking. Bring one leg forward in front of you and the other behind you, relaxing your knees and ankles so your fins trail in the water with minimum resistance. Then straighten and snap your legs together. Glide for a moment before you repeat the stroke. Though the scissors kick can be done either way, usually your lower leg is the one that goes forward while the upper leg goes backward.



The dolphin kick

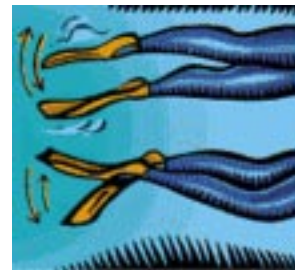
Use the dolphin kick if you lose a fin or if you want a burst of speed. Though it can be the fastest kick, it burns a lot of energy and is difficult to learn. Most people make the mistake of bending at the hip, which sends the butt up and the head down. Instead, keep your head and shoulders as steady as possible and start the kick in your abdomen. From there it should ripple down your body to your hips, butt, hamstrings, calves and ankles. If you've lost a fin, cross that foot over the ankle of the other. One problem for scuba divers: Even when the dolphin kick is done correctly, your tank tends to hit your lower back and your head.



The modified frog and modified flutter

Use these kicks for wreck and cave penetration or anywhere you're close to the bottom and don't

want to kick up silt. For a modified frog kick, bend your knees 90 degrees and your ankles 90 degrees so your fins are parallel to the bottom but above your body. Now rotate your fins outward and snap them together. For a modified flutter, make small flutter kicks from your ankles. Keep your fin motions small and slow so you disturb the water as little as possible.



The flutter kick

Many divers kick as if they were riding a bicycle: they bring their knees up too much and end up pushing back with their heels. Instead, allow your knees to flex only slightly and point your fins straight back. The kick should originate from your hip. Keep it slow and gentle at first and concentrate on form, not thrust. The flutter kick is the most efficient kick to use with fins because it offers the smallest amount of resistance while swimming under water.

Sculling

Sculling is useful for maintaining your depth in an upright position while you take a photo, or while the current carries you along the face of a wall. Your buoyancy should be close to neutral, or just slightly negative. Straighten your knees and move your fins out to the sides and back in a steady, gentle motion. Lead with your ankles, letting your toes trail behind. Your fins should rotate inward as you spread your legs, then outward as you bring them together again. Don't snap your legs together. Think of painting smooth brush strokes with your fin tips, outwards and then back, making broad "S" or figure-eight patterns. When done correctly, your arms and hands won't need to help, leaving them free to operate a camera.



Gwen Rolape

Information for this article was obtained from:

<http://www.scubadiving.com/training/DLAP/july98.shtml>

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first aid, and reef fish identification that can be done in the winter months that don't necessarily involve actually getting in the water but can make your diving experience more enjoyable. He also said a few words about winter storage of equipment.

Phil mentioned that he had spoken to the **CLUB** years ago when we met at the Harley Hotel. Some of the long-term members remembered the downtown location on Lake Eola.

Some of the specific points Phil made were:

- Don't quit learning, in or out of the water
- First Aid - Everyone should take CPR and oxygen training

- Nitrox - Gives you increased safety or bottom time, not both
- Fish Identification - He offers a 4-5 hour course that will greatly increase your ability to describe this aspect of your diving enjoyment to others.

In other **CLUB** business, Mike McCleskey and Marie Frank, told us more about their trip on the Nekton Rorqual in the Bahamas. We finally heard all about how Marie attacked a shark, and just a little about something called 'pole-dancing.'

Last, but certainly not least, we had our famous door prize event. Our thanks to Phil Wet-N-Fla Scuba and for the deluxe dive log book that Grace Hampton won. In the 50-50 Raffle, Gwen Rolape won \$21.

Fantasy Fest 'Flash' Report



All hands are safely accounted for after 24 **MDC** members and friends undertook the annual pilgrimage to Key West for Fantasy Fest 2002. As always, there are many incriminating stories, photos, and memories. Once again, our **MDC** crew led

the parade down Duval Street for the Saturday night Twilight Fantasy Parade. Stay tuned for next month's newsletter for full coverage, or show up at the November meeting and get the news firsthand.



MDC Connections

We have a telephone voicemail account. Got a question about the **CLUB**? Want to let us know that you'll be attending a **CLUB** meeting? Just call (407) 306-5020 and leave a message!

Check out all the great dive information on our **CLUB** home page at: <http://www.martindiveclub.org>.

Editor's Corner

Thanks for all your help. You've been great at getting articles to me by the 15th of the month. Please get them to me in one of the following ways:

- Call me at (407) 356-2290 and sneaker-net your text and graphics on disk to me at MP-031
- E-mail at work: william.paskert@lmco.com; or at home: wpaskert@cfl.rr.com
- Fax (please call before sending) at work: (407) 356-4694; or at home: (407) 678-5311.

Thoughts from Members

Watch out for coconuts

The other day I clipped out an article from the Orlando Sentinel written by Sam Trantum, Florida Correspondent from the South Florida Sun Sentinel, titled "Coconut palms give officials a headache." The article focused on a program in South Florida to trim coconut palms of their fruit prior to the hurricane season. Apparently the coconuts can become quite dangerous in a storm.

The article got really interesting when it quoted Peter Barss, described as a "coconut injury expert." Mr. Barss published a paper in The Journal of Trauma on injuries from falling coconuts. He is a former professor at Canada's McGill University. Wow - I had no idea our world was in need of a coconut injury expert; and if we were, who'd guess we'd find one in Canada, eh? And, if he was a "former" professor, before he hit the big time with

his article in The Journal of Trauma, I wonder where he is now . . . probably not kicked back beneath a palm tree on some tropical island.

Now, given the fact that we do have a coconut injury expert, here's the really scary news. Mr. Barss recently was quoted by the Montreal Mirror as saying he believes that coconuts kill more than 150 people worldwide each year. According to the International Shark Attack File, housed at the University of Florida in Gainesville, worldwide shark attacks range up to 100 a year, resulting in 5 to 15 deaths per year. This means that we are each between 10 and 30 times more likely to meet our demise at the hands of a flying coconut than in the jaws of a man-eating shark. So, on your way to the shark-infested beaches of Volusia County, please, please, be careful not to walk under any of these scary, highly dangerous palm trees - you just can't be too careful!

So, anyone want to go shark diving?

Mike McCleskey



MARTIN DIVE CLUB
MP-200 ESC
609 Heron Bay Drive
Orlando FL 32825
(407) 306-5020

Upcoming Events

- November 12 **Meeting:** Photo Contest, Mike McCleskey
- December 8 **Holiday Party:** Dubsdread, Marie Frank