

INTERNSHIP REPORT

June 7 - July 22, 2012

Trying on the Scuba Diving fan wear. It's soft. It's comfortable. And it's coming soon to a magazine near you.

Photo by:
Katy Danca Galli



Bonnier Media Internship Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society

Alec Nielson

A few months before I arrived at the Bonnier Corporation offices in Winter Park, FL, Patricia Wuest, senior editor of Sport Diver, sent me a list of questions--a get to know you Q&A, if you will.

Included in the list was a question about what I was hoping to accomplish while interning for Sport Diver and Scuba Diving magazines.

The following was my response:

“While interning at Sport Diver and Scuba Diving magazines I would like to write something meaningful. My goal

as a writer has always been to help people and work toward positive change. That may mean writing an article about protecting sharks from finning or piecing together a column for scuba diving beginners about when it is appropriate to pee in your wetsuit. I think both are important.

Mainly, I am hoping to gain more experience in this field. This is an opportunity to temporarily work in my dream job. I recognize that any experience I glean from this internship will be both exciting and highly valuable.”

I was right--this six-week internship was both exciting and highly valuable. The staffs of Sport Diver and Scuba Diving immediately welcomed me to the team. I received training and experience you can't find in a classroom. I added at least seven destinations to my scuba diving bucket list. I even wrote an article about shark finning.

When July 22nd rolled around, I didn't want to say goodbye.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's start at the beginning--the very beginning.

Good News

Notes on being the 2012 Bonnier Media Intern

March 3, 2012--I was sitting on Newport Beach in California when my cell phone rang. I wiped off the sand and salty water from my fingers, then said hello to the California-based caller.

It was George Wozencraft, internship coordinator for Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society. He was congratulating me--I had been selected for the 2012 Bonnier Media Internship.

And so began my journey, as I would call it if this were ABC's *The Bachelorette*.

A short three months later, I loaded up my car with scuba gear, my favorite notebooks and the entire contents of my closet (minus the winter clothes) and headed off to Winter Park, Florida.

Winter Park, FL, for the record, is 2,126 miles from my hometown of Chandler, AZ. By car, that's 34 hours--or 2,040 minutes, if you're trying to sound dramatic.

I drove through seven states, one of them with a Tornado warning, before making it to the Bonnier offices in Winter Park, Florida.

Welcome to Bonnier

June 7, 2012-- Bonnier Corporation is a publishing group that produces almost 50 niche magazines. The corporation covers everything from

parenting to fly fishing. According to its website, Bonnier Corp. is one of the top ten publishing companies nationwide.

I took the stairs to the reception area, thrilled to be part of this magazine empire--thrilled to be working for Sport Diver and Scuba Diving magazines.

Upon arrival, Eric Michael, editor in chief of Scuba Diving, gave me the grand tour of the Bonnier Offices, a labyrinth of conference rooms and cubicles that sit on the second floor of an outdoor mall.

He led me to the printing room, pointed out the locations of vending machines and introduced me to the staffs of both magazines, whilst I tried desperately to memorize names.

Then he sat me down and asked what I hoped to accomplish during the course of the internship--what were my goals? he asked.

I thought for a moment.

My first goal was to unpack my car without the trunk exploding in one of those horrible sitcom moments where the contents of an overfilled closet come crashing down on an unexpected character.

I skipped over that goal in our conversation though, and went straight to goal number two: write something.

Left: Scuba Diving proofs hanging on the wall. This allows the editors and the art director see how the pages will flow together before they're in the magazine.

Right: My cubicle. Complete with theBlu screensaver.

Photos by:
Alec Nielson



I explained to Eric that I had majored in journalism, and while I had a fair amount of newspaper experience, I was interested in learning more about the magazine publishing process. Essentially, I wanted to learn it all. Any experience he could throw at me, I would take happily. And, I told him, I would love to write something, should the opportunity arise.

Writing for the Magazine

June 11, 2012-- The opportunity arose my second day of the internship.

“Did you get my email?” Eric asked.

I closed out of the scuba manufacturer’s website that I was using to check facts about regulators and scanned through my unread messages.

There was an email about the USCG *Mohawk*, a ship scheduled to be scuttled off the coast of Sanibel Island in the upcoming weeks.

Eric asked me if I wanted to write a piece about the soon-to-be artificial reef. I said yes, surprised and ecstatic that my number one goal was being checked off so soon into the internship.

I wasn’t entirely sure why I was being afforded this opportunity--why no one was asking me to make coffee or organize pens, but I decided to seize the moment--carpe diem, so to speak.

I spent the rest of the afternoon glued to Google, researching everything I could find about the *Mohawk*. By the

end of the day, I had written my first 150-word piece for the magazine.

What Do You Do There?

When I told people that I was interning at Sport Diver and Scuba Diving magazines, they would invariably asked me, “What do you do there?”

Here’s the answer--

A little bit of everything.

I did some fact checking. For example, in Scuba Diving you can read about the Scuba Lab tests of [13 new regulators](#). I checked that article to make sure the Aqua Lung Legend really had 4LP ports and the Mares Instinct 12S was, in fact, under \$500.

I also read through stories about extreme shore dives, the best airplane wrecks, and the stunt man who choreographed the underwater scene in the movie Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.

When I wasn’t checking stories for accuracy, I was usually posting articles to the web. As part of my internship, I had the opportunity to attend Bonnier’s web uploading and search engine optimization training, an invaluable addition to my resume.

I edited proofs, did research for articles, conducted interviews, attended staff meetings, asked coworkers if the city was in imminent danger of a flood or hurricane (it rained non-stop the first couple of weeks), and sometimes, I helped in the photo lab.

New Artificial Reef for Southwest Florida

Former Coast Guard cutter *Mohawk* to be scuttled off Sanibel Island BY ALLEC NIELSON



MOHAWK

Location: 20 miles off Sanibel Island, Florida

Depth: 90 feet

Type: former U.S. Coast Guard cutter

LOA: 165 feet

Dates of Service: Jan. 19, 1935 to Jan. 8, 1948

Career Highlights: Sailed with the Greenland Patrol during WWII, fought in 14 U-boat engagements, saved sailors who had been torpedoed in the North Atlantic, and was the last ship to radio in the weather to Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower before the D-Day invasion

Having once fought in World War II, the ex-United States Coast Guard cutter *Mohawk* will serve its final duty as an artificial reef off Sanibel Island in Lee County, Florida. Reinstalled guns, intact propeller and smokestack that

opens to the engine room (for trained divers only) are just part of what will make the Mohawk Veterans Memorial Reef a world-class dive. Add the goliath grouper expected to take residence in the wreck, and you've got yourself

what Joe Weatherby, Reefmakers' director of marketing, calls a "one-of-a-kind photographic opportunity." To read a full account of Weatherby's mission to sink the Mighty Mo, go to scubadiving.com/mohawk.

Lights Camera ACTION

June 25, 2012-- When Sport Diver's photo editor and art director, Carrie Garcia and Elizabeth Fleener, were shooting dive computers for an issue, they allowed me to come to the photo studio and help out.

Today's assignment: throw water at a dive computer.

Carrie and Elizabeth wanted to capture an image of the computers with a splash of water spraying off the consoles.

They enlisted the help of Jon Whittle, who set up a fancy rig with motion-sensored flashes and a speed-of-light shutter speed.

To capture the falling water and to get the crisp, clear shot Carrie and Elizabeth wanted, we needed a really fast shutter speed, and, as Jon explained, you don't get any faster than the speed of light.

As I understood it, the flash acted as the shutter speed. So we turned off the lights, the motion of Carrie's hand dropping a cup of water triggered the motion-activated flash, the flash went off and captured the image, and, when the timing was right, we would get an image like the ones you'll see in August's issue of Sport Diver. Every drop of water is perfectly frozen as it falls. No blur about it.



“A very subtle difference can make the picture or not”

- Annie Leibovitz

It took the entire afternoon to shoot one console.

We tried different methods of pouring the water (starting off by hand-tossing a cup of water, ending with a paper-towel-tube super soaker). We made tiny adjustments to the timing of the flash and motion sensor. We occasionally adjusted the height or angle of the dive computer.

And then we did it again.

Wash, rinse and repeat.

By the end of the day, parts of the photo studio were an inch deep in water.

This was especially problematic given our lack of a mop, but we managed. A stack of paper towels, some strategic plastic moving and one portable fan later, we had a squeaky clean and almost dry photo studio, sure to be ready for the photo shoot taking place the next morning.



Above:

The rig. Note the saran wrap, used as a waterproofing device, covering the photo equipment.

Left to Right:

Art Director Elizabeth Fleener and Photo Editor Carrie Garcia disassemble the photo setup after a day in the studio.

Fleener uses a stack of paper towels to dry the studio floor.

Bottom:

Garcia tries to get a controlled splash by directing the water through a PVC pipe.

Photos by: Alec Nielson



DIVING

ScubaLab Dive Blue Grotto

June 12, 2012-- I wasn't sure how much diving I was going to be able to do given the publishing nature of my internship. I was surprised then, when Eric Michael said I could tag a long on a dive trip less than two weeks into my internship.

Five test divers and I met at Blue Grotto, a freshwater spring in Williston, FL, to test dive computers for ScubaLab.

I took photos of the test divers and helped assemble the writing slates that the diver's used to keep track of their ratings and comments for each computer.

Then I jumped in and trolled around the cool, little spring.

At 72 degrees year round the spring was a little chilly, but the visibility made up for the less-than-warm temperature.

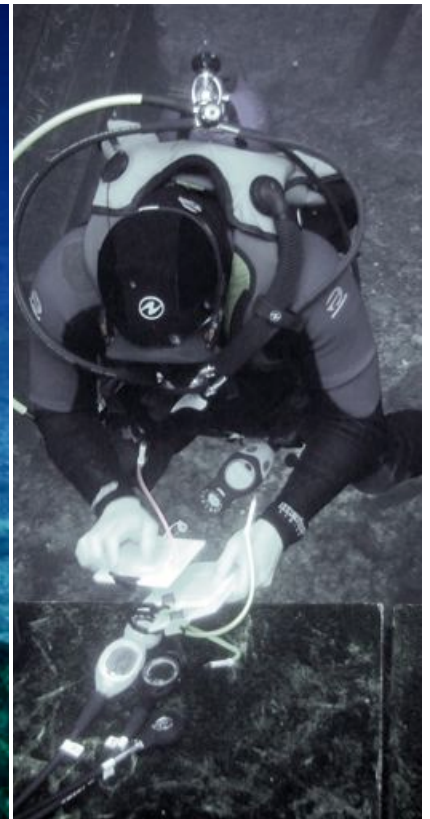
I peered into the underwater cavern that reaches a depth of about 100 feet, admired a catfish as it swam lazily along the bottom and explored Peace Rock--the spring's approximately 50-foot mark.

It was a fun introduction to Florida diving. In fact, compared to the Arizona diving to which I've grown accustomed (5 feet of vis in a lake where beer cans are more common than fish), it was unforgettable.



The Turtle of Blue Grotto

I'm pretty sure it's standard protocol for every OWUSS intern who dives at Blue Grotto to post a picture of this freshwater resident.



Test divers use different manufacturers' dive computers and rate them on user friendliness and other criteria.
Photos by: Alec Nielson



Begin
With
Review
And
Friend

PADI



Photos by: Katy Danca Galli

Tag Teaming with the Rolex Scholar Diving Blue Heron Bridge

July 9, 2012--When Patricia Wuest, senior editor of Sport Diver, planned a staff dive trip for July, she reached out to Megan Cook, the 2012 OWUSS North American Rolex Scholar, to see if she wanted to join.

The week of the dive, Megan was making her way across Florida, road trip style. She squeezed in a visit to Bonnier between diving at the Florida Aquarium in Tampa and getting cave certified with Jill Heinerth in High Springs.

I met Megan Monday night (we were roommates during her 3-day stay in Winter park), and I was fascinated to hear her stories about lulling sharks to sleep in the Bahamas, joining an NOAA cruise last minute and trying out cavern diving.

There's no shortage of stories when you're flying by the seat of your wetsuit from one incredible dive opportunity to the next.

Megan and I spent the night chatting about our respective Our World-Underwater experiences, our hometowns, our first jobs out of college and everything in between.

The next morning we loaded our scuba gear into the rented white suburban and made our way to West Palm Beach with the staff of Scuba Diving (Patricia and the Sport Diver staff ended up being unable to make the trip).

Megan and I were dive buddies for the hour-long shore dive at Blue Heron bridge. We took plenty of photos to document this. Unfortunately, the right lens of my mask is foggy in every single one. Maybe next time I dive with a Rolex scholar I'll remember to defog my mask prior to entering the dive site.

It was a pleasure meeting Megan, and I wish her the best of luck both in the remainder of her scholarship year and as she continues to serve as a voice for the ocean!



Blue Heron Bridge

A Shallow Shore Dive with Lots of Life

July 10, 2012--It was the perfect day for diving--sunny and clear--which was something of an anomaly given the tropical storm that had been making its way across town.

We--the staff of Scuba Diving, Megan Cook and I--stopped at Dayo Scuba to pick up tanks, then drove to West Palm for some warm water, Florida diving.

We arrived at Phil Foster Park where we geared up and completed buddy checks. Then it was off to the clear blue waters ahead.

Blue Heron Bridge is a shallow shore dive known for its macro life. In my 60 minutes of bottom time, my depth gauge never went below 15 feet.

Like a book and its cover though, you can't judge a dive site by its depth. I saw a horseshoe crab, a bearded fireworm, one huge starfish, and various small fish--and that was just on the surface swim to the site.

At the end of the surface swim, we came to the columns of Blue Heron Bridge.

The waters darkened as I swam into the shade of the bridge, and the mood of the dive shifted from light and happy to almost eerie.

The shade though, offered a welcome reprieve from the heat. Wearing a wetsuit in these waters felt something like wearing a snow coat in July.

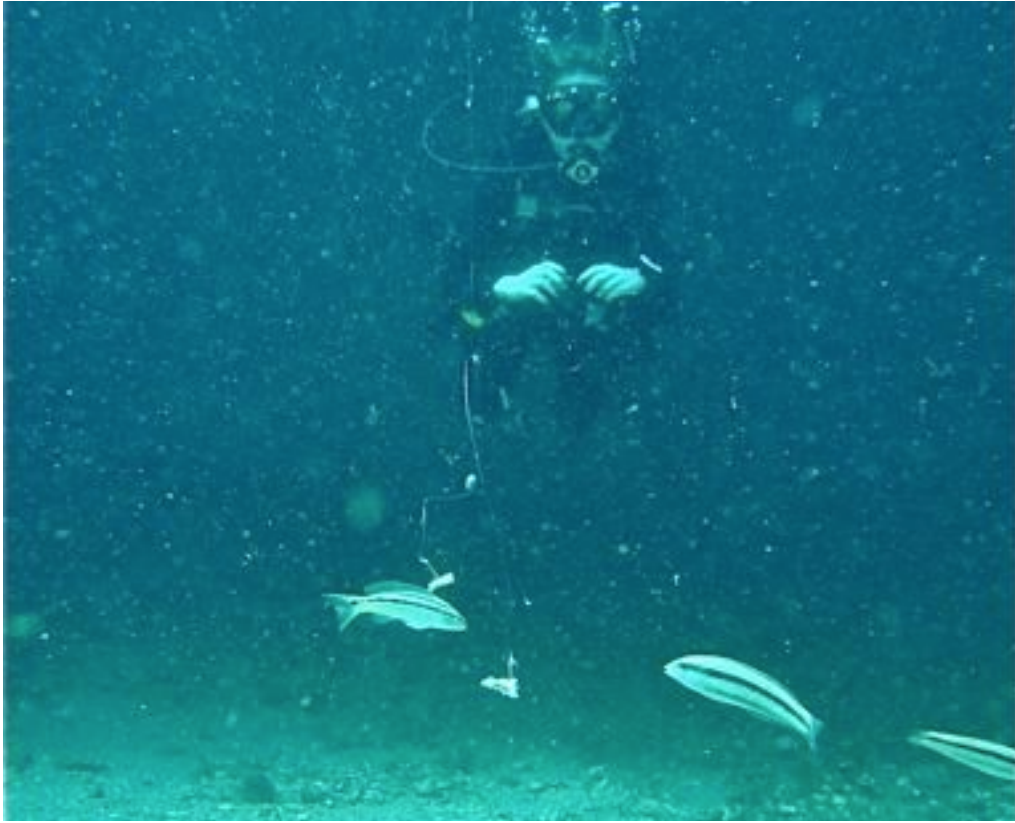
These darker, cooler waters--divided from the sunny side only by a line of shade--were home to a new array of creatures.

A school of Atlantic Spadefish circled through the dive site, unbothered by me and my bubbles. Camouflaged critters crawled across the sand below, their hiding places given away only by their more noticeable movements.

As we finished the dive and swam back toward the lighter waters, we were greeted by a school of silversides. I watched them flit about in their practiced pattern and felt lucky to have such an authentic view of the underwater world.

We surfaced and headed back to shore. I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to Florida ocean diving.

UNDERWATER



Dive Site: Blue Heron Bridge
Photos by: Megan Cook



Telling the Story

Three Articles I Loved Writing

Each article I wrote for Sport Diver and Scuba Diving came with the opportunity to learn something new. I loved the virtual immersion into the scuba world that these stories afforded me. The following three are a few of my favorites.

Plastic Paradise



For this Sport Diver subculture piece I interviewed Angela Sun. She hosts Yahoo! Sports Minute and American Ninja Warrior, she is an anchor for Tennis Channel and she's a surfer and scuba diver. I interviewed her about her first full-length documentary: Plastic Paradise. In the documentary, Sun visits the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and delves into the marine debris issue. She talks specifically about the plastic that is littering our oceans. During the interview she mentioned one of her most memorable moments. At Midway Atoll--the atoll closest to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch--she found a 35mm film cap. "It's just kind of crazy to think that the things that we used to use, that we threw away, that we don't think about now, can end up somewhere," Sun said. "And a lot of that stuff, specifically plastic, does stay forever, because it was made to last forever." It was interesting to hear her perspective about this issue facing our

oceans. It was inspiring to hear her talk about her journey to inform people and help bring about change. She convinced me--I've been counting, and trying to reduce, the amount of plastic I buy and throw away ever since.

Panhandle Shipwreck Trail

PASSPORT TO THE PANHANDLE

The day after I finished writing a story about the Florida Panhandle Shipwreck Trail for Sport Diver, I went to a Scuba Diving meeting for the October issue. When we began the discussion about the Currents section of the magazine, Eric Michael, editor in chief, asked me if I would write a piece about the Panhandle Shipwreck Trail. I told him I'd be happy to, but warned him that I had just finished the same piece for Sport Diver. He told me to adjust the story to fit the Scuba Diving brand--focus on the local diving aspect, he said, how and where to dive the wrecks. And so I set about re-writing the story. It was a challenge--I had never written two pieces about one topic before. However, it gave me a better understanding about the unique brands of the two magazines. Besides, who doesn't want to write about 12 wrecks in the Gulf of Mexico with fascinating histories?

Spinning to End Finning



This is a profile piece I am still working on for Sport Diver. It's about Mark DiMaggio and Devon Lambert, a teacher and former student who spent their summer cycling across the country on behalf of sharks. Their goal was to raise funds for and spread awareness about shark finning--the practice wherein fishers cut off shark's fins, throw the half-alive shark back into the ocean, then sell the fins for shark fin soup. Hoping to help put an end to this practice, DiMaggio and Lambert biked from Colorado to Kentucky, along the way telling everyone they met about shark finning and its consequences. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to these two about their experiences and about their passion for sharks and our oceans. I agree with what Lambert said about being a catalyst for change: "If people just got out and did something about things they are passionate about, it would really make a difference."

THANK YOU

I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend these six weeks with the staff of Sport Diver and Scuba Diving. It was an incredible and unforgettable opportunity.

Several people contributed to make this experience possible for me. I recognize that considerable time and effort goes into coordinating internships like this one, and I am grateful to everyone who put in hours on my behalf.

Specifically, I would like to give a special thanks shout out to the following:

Patricia Wuest, senior editor of Sport Diving and my internship handler. Between managing Sport Diver and Asia-Pacific, Patricia has plenty on her plate. She still managed though, to answer my questions and find story assignments for me. She met with me to ensure I was interested in the stories I was working on and to make sure I was enjoying the internship. She even had me over for dinner--home cooked meals no less. Thanks Patricia, for being my mentor, dive planner and fearless editor. It has been a pleasure working for you!

Eric Michael, editor in chief of Scuba Diving. As I mentioned, Eric was my welcoming committee when I arrived at Bonnier. He gave me a tour of the offices, pointing out all the most important landmarks (like restrooms and vending machines). He continued to be an excellent mentor throughout my internship, and I am forever grateful to him for directing me to the best beach in Florida. Thanks Eric, for giving me

that first writing opportunity at the magazines, for inviting me to dive at Blue Grotto, and, in general, for letting me be part of the Scuba Diving team. I am still working on memorizing Ron Swanson's Pyramid of Greatness; I'll let you know when I've got it down.

Mary Frances Emmons, Becky Strauss, Kristen Heptinstall, Katy Danca Galli, Carrie Garcia, Elizabeth Fleener and Monica Alberta. Mary Frances and Becky kept me busy with interesting assignments. Kristen invited me to the web training meetings and gave me invaluable practice posting articles online. Katy gave me advice about who to contact for freelancing opportunities, provided a photo studio tutorial and in general was always willing to lend a helping hand. Carrie let me join her photo shoot (the one with the dive computers), which ended up being one of my favorite days. Elizabeth told me what to expect during hurricane season, which calmed my fears of my apartment washing away. She also gave me advice about the best places to live in Orlando. Monica was my cubical neighbor, and she never once complained when I would check my syntax flow -- by reading my stories aloud. A huge thanks to the staff of Sport Diver and Scuba Diving for being so welcoming and kind.

Teri Staley, executive assistant to CEO. Teri coordinated my stay at the corporate apartment. It was beautiful, spacious, and perfect. Thank you to her and Bonnier for letting me live there.

Martha Sanders, treasurer at Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society. She coordinated my scholarship funds, and she was quick to fix any and all of my trivial problems.

George Wozencraft, internship coordinator at Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society. I don't know how he makes time for all the OWUSS interns, but he was always quick to answer my questions. He was helpful from the first day to the last day of this process. This program simply would not have run as smoothly without his help. Thank you for helping me with expense reports, pre-internship planning, and everything in-between. In short, thank you for making this internship possible.

Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society. I am forever indebted to OWUSS for making this experience possible. I can't say enough what an incredible opportunity it was. Again, I recognize that several people were responsible for coordinating and funding several exceptional internships. I know I would not have had this opportunity to live out a dream without Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society and its volunteers. Thank you!



Snorkeling at Blue
Grotto
Photo by:
Mark Poulalion