

PROFILE

Although he grew up in a family with two artists—his father and brother—Club member Bruce Yates didn't find his artistic outlet until he was in his 40s. And even then, it was in a round-about way.

Bruce, age 52, says when he was 40 he was working with teenage Explorer Scouts and went through scuba certification with them for a diving trip to British Columbia. Bruce says although he had always enjoyed swimming, scuba diving was not something he had ever thought about. After the British Columbia trip, however, he found he really enjoyed it. He continued diving locally, and began taking trips to warm-water destinations around the world.

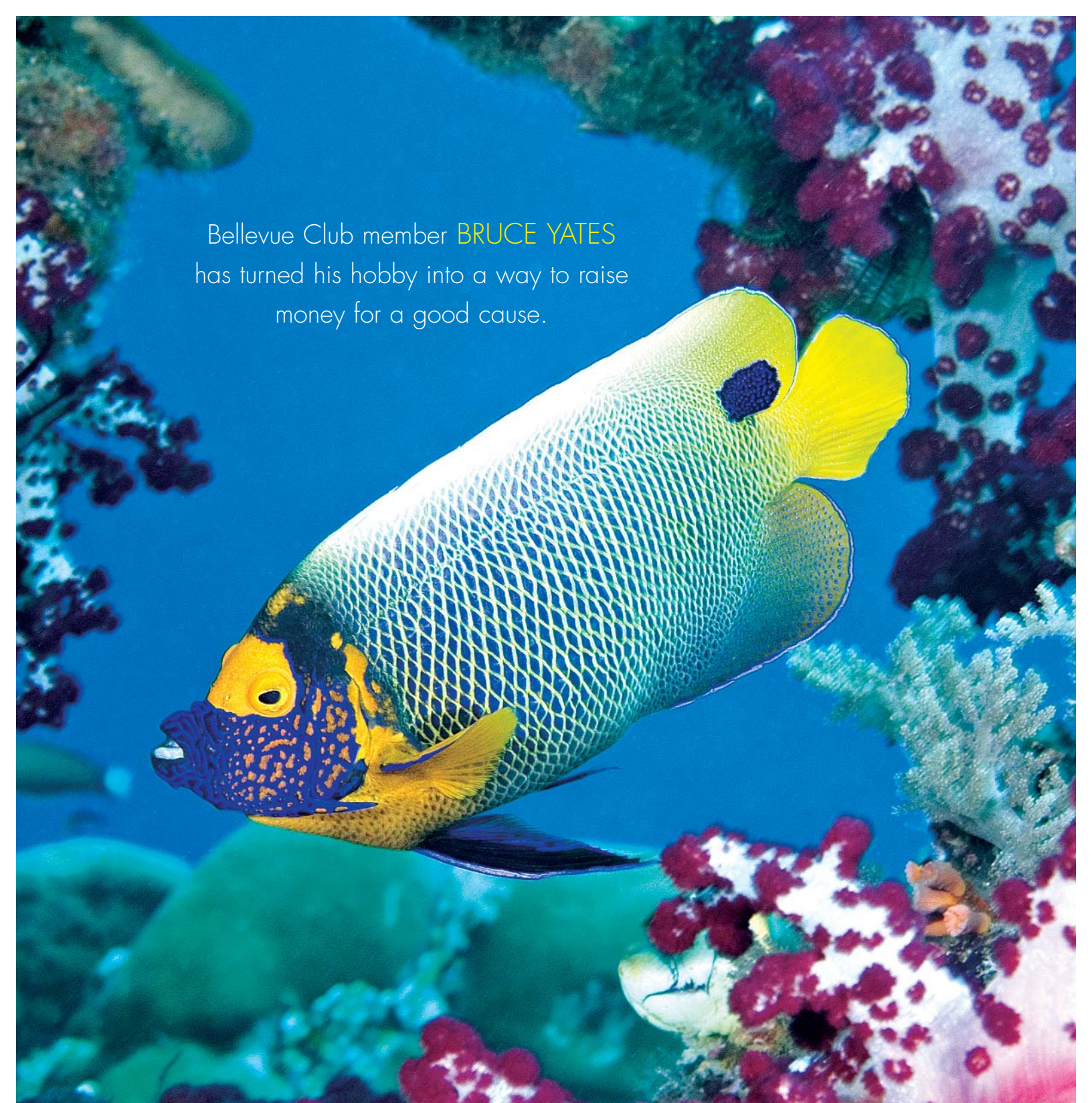
Bruce says many divers shoot underwater photos or videos, and soon he wanted to try. He started with video, eventually buying an underwater housing for his 35 mm camera for still photography. For Bruce, each medium has its advantages, but eventually still photography won.



RIGHT A masked angelfish in Raja Ampat, Indonesia.

LEFT Bruce Yates. Photo by Cheri Yates.

UNDERW

A vibrant, colorful fish, likely a Moorish Idol, is the central focus of the image. It has a white body with a yellow and blue patterned face and a yellow tail. The fish is swimming in a clear blue ocean, surrounded by various types of coral, including red and white branching corals and green soft corals. The lighting is bright, highlighting the intricate details of the fish's scales and the surrounding marine life.

Bellevue Club member **BRUCE YATES**
has turned his hobby into a way to raise
money for a good cause.

ATER ART

BY STACY BOOTH



"Video gives much more a sense of being underwater because you can see the movement. The problem is all the editing work you have to do after you get home," he says. With his busy career, Bruce says still photography works better. Almost all the work is done when he's taking the photo, not after he gets home. "If you have a good picture it doesn't take much to then turn it into a print or have it some other way so you can see it," he says. Bruce is mostly self-taught in photography, having taken a few classes along the way but mostly he learned by reading and by trial and error.

About four years ago, Bruce abandoned 35 mm film photography for a digital SLR camera. He believes digital cameras offer multiple advantages, especially underwater. They allow him to instantly see if pictures are over- or underexposed and allow him to get more—and better—images. "Digital lets you see the results and adjust settings quickly. And you can take lots more pictures when you don't have to change film." Bruce routinely takes 100 or more shots during a single dive.

Bruce's favorite places to dive are in Indonesia. He says Indonesia has more varieties of fish, coral and other sea life than anywhere else; one area called Raja Ampat is considered the center of marine

biodiversity for earth. "Three of my last five dive trips have been to Indonesia," he says. Papua New Guinea is also a favorite spot, and Bruce has been there four times. Certain dive destinations have special attractions, and like most divers, Bruce will plan trips to see specific things, such as manta rays, dolphins, sea lions or sharks. Bruce has seen all those things on dives, but says he most enjoys beautiful reefs teeming with fish and coral.

When he travels, Bruce says he does most of his diving from "live-aboard" boats. This enables him to dive at many sites that are not reachable by land-based "day boats." He goes on most dive trips without his wife, Cheri, a pediatric neuropsychologist. Although Cheri is a diver, the idea of living on a boat for a week or more with diving as the only available activity doesn't appeal to her. "She has other interests and



so, fortunately for me, she decided some years back rather than having me try to drag her along on dive trips, she'd rather I go get it out of my system. That way, when we plan a vacation, it's to someplace we both want to go."

He says their last trip together was to Svalbard, north of the Arctic Circle to see polar bears and cubs in their natural habitat. Bruce took hundreds of photos on that trip with fantastic

results, but he says he actually finds above-water photography intimidating. He feels that he doesn't have the artistic eye many photographers have. "Underwater, the subject of a photograph is usually obvious—a fish, turtle or reef scene—but above water the number of potential subjects is almost overwhelming. I don't naturally see the artistic opportunities many photographers do," he says, "but it's a skill I'm working on."

Bruce says he has never sold his photographs to make money, but he does have a Web site set up at www.underwaterreflections.com, where visitors can view his photographs and purchase prints of various sizes. Also for sale on his Web site is a 2007 calendar that features his photos. All the money from both the calendars and prints of Bruce's photos is going to the PKD Foundation, an organization working to find a cure for Polycystic Kidney Disease. PKD is a genetic disease that has touched Bruce's life; two families at his small investment management company, Appropriate Balance Financial Services, Inc., have been affected by the disease. "Although it's the most common genetic,





life-threatening disease on earth, almost nobody has heard of it," he says. According to the PKD Foundation's Web site, PKD affects more people than cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, hemophilia, Down syndrome and sickle-cell anemia combined. The disease causes the kidneys to lose function due to cysts

Bruce also explained December's choice: "I used a pretty red and white sea star that was white with red tips, and it happened to be on a white sandy bottom, so it almost looks like a Christmas star on snow."

Bruce described two other photographs that are in the calendar, each of which required that he patiently

started the company in 1984, and the name Appropriate Balance Financial Services comes from an appropriate balance model of investing Bruce developed. He says he is particularly proud of the fact that three of his first four employees are still with him after more than 20 years, and the company has grown to 17



that grow on them, eventually requiring those affected to go on dialysis or get a kidney transplant.

"I was able to convince my partner (at Appropriate Balance) to have the company pay for all the production costs of the calendars," says Bruce, "so all of the proceeds from calendar sales go directly to the PKD Foundation. Thus far we've raised more than \$10,000 with the calendars."

From his hundreds of photographs, Bruce says he chose some favorites to go into the calendar, in some cases, because they seemed to fit a particular month. "For October, I used an orange frog fish because it kind of looks like a scary pumpkin."

wait in the ocean. For one photograph, Bruce waited near a cleaning station—a place where big fish stop and little fish clean parasites off the larger fish. After waiting, he got his photograph—a masked angel fish. Another memorable photograph involved a school of tiny glass fish. Bruce stayed by the fish for a half-hour until a coral trout, a type of grouper, swam into the area, giving him his photo. Bruce says planning like that often creates his favorite photographs. "I really remember the experience," he says.

Bruce is the president and founder of his business (www.appropriatebalance.com), which is located in downtown Bellevue. He

employees managing close to \$400 million for clients in 26 states. Anyone interested in buying a calendar or making a tax-deductible donation may purchase it on his Web site, www.underwaterreflections.com or call his office at 451-0499.

For more information about PKD, visit www.pkdcure.org.

TOP L-R Glass fish and coral trout at a reef in Raja Ampat, Indonesia; a seahore in St. Vincent; clown anemonefish in an anemone; and mating mandarinfish in Lembeh, Indonesia.

MIDDLE Polar bear mother and cubs in Svalbard.

OPPOSITE Bruce with his underwater equipment. Photo by David Haas.