

Bits & Pixels



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2024 Image of the Year - "Picking Up Sticks" by Julie Chen

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My Two Bits A Hard Goodbye

by Ken Jones

This fall, Padre Trails lost a good friend, and valued member, *Christina Parsons*. Chris passed peacefully in hospice on Monday, November 18th with her longtime partner, Steve Downey, at her side.



Over her years as a member, Chris contributed so much to the Club through her photography, her cheerful personality, her consistently positive approach to things, and her extraordinary editing talent. She was the senior editor for this newsletter for several years, and her efforts helped elevate the letter to award winning status within *Photographic Society of America* (PSA)



newsletter competitions. I can say with all honesty that those awards would not have happened had it not been for Chris's keen eye and gentle direction. Well, maybe not always so gentle, but always spot on!

Her health and other interests did not allow her to continue as editor/proofer, but so like her, Chris built and refined a professional level style guide for the letter assuring future editors and proof readers got it right. Every time I refer to that guide, I think of Chris and all she did for Padre Trails.

In looking through Chris's Club images, I ran across a shot she captured along the *Laguna Grande Trail* in 2020. The message that caught her eye on the found oven mitt among flowers is a good one for us all to remember. *Enjoy Every Moment.*



Take your lens cap off...
Ken

In the New Year Calendar Highlights in Club Year 2025 As We See Them Now

The Club's fiscal year actually began on October 1st, and we've had a pretty good start so far. Now we're looking at the start of a brand new *calendar* year. 2025 is lurking right outside our door and will kick it open and barge in very soon. Hopefully this newsletter will be on your desktop before the ball drops, but we'll have to see how that goes.

A big thing for Club members in 2025 will be our second print exhibit in the *Nancy and Steve Hawk Gallery* at the Pacific Grove public library. Opening on Saturday, March 29, 2025, our exhibit, *The Monterey Peninsula: Naturally* will run through June 28th. A reception will be held on Friday, April 4th at the library.

As luck would have it, *Ann Jastrab* and the *Center for Photographic Art* (CPA) is developing a month-long celebration of photography on the Central Coast entitled *PhotoCarmel '25*. The organizers of this community event have asked the Pacific Grove Library to participate by displaying photography and hosting a speaker or other photographic attraction. PTCC will be doing both. Plans are in work for something to add to our artists' reception that would expand the impact of our show, and support CPA's PhotoCarmel celebration. Stay tuned.

Speaking of hanging out on the walls, PTCC has again been asked to exhibit at the *Avery Gallery* in *Seaside* in 2026. The planning for this exhibit hasn't begun, but a first thought was to entitle the show *Freeform*, and let participating members show what they're most happy with and proud of, regardless of subject matter, genre, or technique.

In the coming year, the Club will hold two casual mixers to let members connect, catch up, and share photo ideas and victories. We'll also be actively looking for a meeting venue that we can afford without big dues hikes to let us meet in person at least for one of our two monthly meetings.

Happy New Year to all from Padre Trails Camera Club.

October 2024: Pictorial - Open Pictorial Competition Winners

Judged by Felix Alfaro



A California native and Monterey Bay resident since 1971, I've been surrounded by natural beauty my entire life thus far. I have been surfing in the Monterey Bay since 1982; and since 1993 have operated my surfboard repair business, Sand Dollar Surfboard Repair.

I've also had the good fortune to be surrounded by creative, talented people who have influenced, educated, and inspired me as I've grown along my own path. My wife and father are both longtime photographers and harsh critics; and I've been lucky to have them in my corner, pulling no punches.

I've been a rabid student of photography for over a decade and have enjoyed some modest commercial success. My work is hanging in many homes as well as numerous medical facilities throughout the state.

I've been a sitting member on the Santa Cruz County Open Studios Art Tour Committee for the last two years.

Being a dad and husband to my beautiful family is my primary source of joy and gratitude. After that I'm chasing light in our neighborhood or researching and planning shots elsewhere.

I'm happiest when I'm creating and I've always appreciated quality of light. Photography has given me the lexicon to describe and share it.

About this competition:

The Club's **pictorial category** is defined as a visually impactful photograph which projects emotional intent and/or artistic quality, and through the photographer's efforts, emphasizes beauty of subject matter, tonality and composition. This category offers artistic freedom: the "digital dark room" is allowed, as long as the compositional reality of the photograph is maintained. Entries should be a faithful representation of the original scene, and localized adjustments can be used appropriately. Pictorial is typically an "open" category, but may be "directed" to incorporate specific photographic elements.

October 16th Open Pictorial Winners

Group Blue



1st "Sunset at Soberanes"
Patricia McKean



2nd "Pot of Gold Behind the Barn"
Chris Johnson



3rd "Weston Beach, Point Lobos"
Sara A Courtneidge



HM "Sunset at Asilomar"
Carol Silveira



HM "Face Off"
Julie Chen



HM "Canadian Mountain Sunrise"
Ken Jones

October 16th Open Pictorial Winners

Group Green



1st "Running from the Broch"
Jared Ikeda



2nd "Down by the Waterline"
Karen Schofield



3rd "Colors of the Botswana Sunset"
Karen Schofield

October 16th Open Pictorial Winners

Group Green



HM "Abandoned Farmhouse"
Bill Shewchuk



HM "Cut Up Fruit"
Brian Spiegel



HM "The Old Steel Bridge"
Bill Shewchuk



HM "Falling Leaf"
Joni Zabala

October 16th Open Pictorial Winners

Group Red



1st "Workin the Corral"
Rick Verbanec



2nd "Big Leopard in a Tree at Sabi Sands near Kruger
South Africa"
Rick Thau



3rd "Beaujolais Wine Cave"
Dick Light

October 16th Open Pictorial Winners

Group Red



HM "Putting to Sea"
Rick Verbanec



HM "Peruvian Fisherman"
Jerry Loomis



HM "Determined 10 Year Old"
Dick Light



HM "Autumn Stroll"
Don Eastman

Revisiting the Basics - *Processing*

Number 3 in the *Skill Set* Series from the Photographic Society of America's (PSA) monthly Journal.

by Ken Jones

Charles F. Gattis, Jr. is a retired pastor living near Huntsville, Alabama. He's a master photographer and past president of the *Huntsville Photographic Society*, a PSA Club with more than 200 members. His series of articles underscores the importance of building your photographic skills.

In the 3rd Quarter issue of this newsletter, I recapped Charles's first two *Skill Set* articles, *Seeing*, and *Capturing* that appeared in the August and September issues of the Journal. In part three of the series, published in October's issue, Charles shares his insights into the importance of photographers building *Processing* skills.

His work as a darkroom assistant at the age of thirteen allowed him to witness the steps taken to create changes in an image transforming it from what was captured by the camera, into the art expressed by the finished product.

In those early days he says, very little could be done to change an image. With today's digital cameras and desktop darkroom, *everything* can be changed, or even manufactured. Notwithstanding the ongoing debate over how much manipulation is acceptable, Charles stresses that processing is as essential a skill set for photographers as those of seeing and capturing.

In explaining his own processing learning curve, Charles relates the story of an image taken during a vacation in *Prague*. The scene was of a small boat traversing the *Certovka Canal*. It was a quick shot taken while walking with his traveling companions. He loved the image so much that he had it framed and gave it to his mother. The print now hangs in his son's living room.

The more he looked at the image, however, the more he realized it didn't really convey what caught his eye at the time. In his words, "The lighting was all wrong."

Drawing from what he had learned in a lighting course conducted by *Matt Kloskowski*, he worked to transform the image from what he saw, to how he always thought about when viewing it.

He transformed the image from the original daytime shot into one in which night had fallen and the little boat was sailing down the canal in the evening. The boat and walls were given a backlit effect that highlighted the boat and drew the viewer to it. It, of course, wasn't what he saw, but it now was the image Charles has always seen in his mind, and he was very pleased with the outcome of his processing efforts. He sent both the before and after images to Mr. Kloskowski for his opinion. Matt's reply that he liked them both equally wasn't exactly what Charles had expected after all his work on it.

He then sent the new print to his son, who told him he would keep the original as it had been his mother's.

What Charles took away from all of this is that the value of an image is in the eye of the beholder and the attachment that viewer has to the scene. The work he did on the image to achieve his vision really satisfied him, but not so much others. A lesson there. You may not want to spend hours transforming an image, but processing in some way is part of the creative flow of creating art. Again in his words, "Only the photographer knows what emotions and feelings an image brings to bear. It is in the connection between the artist and the viewer that the magic happens."



Edward Weston's Words of Wisdom

- "Anything more than 500 yards from the car just isn't photogenic."
- "Results alone should be appraised; the way in which these are achieved is of importance only to the maker."
- "I would say to any artist: Don't be repressed in your work, dare to experiment, consider any urge; if in a new direction all the better."

Source: Various

2024 Club Year-End Pot Luck & Awards

The Club held its annual year-end potluck and awards ceremony on Saturday, October 18th. The event celebrates member achievements and is traditionally well attended; this year was no exception.



Festivities began with a social hour enhanced by a robust potluck. After dinner, awards were presented for High-Point winners in each group, listed at right, and a special surprise presentation of the *Sharon Blaziek Extra Mile Award* to *Chris Johnson* for her dedication to revitalizing the Club's Group Shoot program, and the introduction and growth of two additional out-of-meeting photographic events for members, the Pop-Ups and Scavenger Hunt challenges.



The award was created to honor the memory of *Sharon Blaziek*, whose nearly thirty years of service and dedication to PTCC in a variety of roles represent going the extra mile and beyond. This award recognizes a current member whose dedication to Padre Trails Camera Club has gone that "extra mile" in terms of exceptional personal time, effort, and dedication. The merit of the award is in the service, independent of photographic accomplishments. It is not scheduled or mandatory, but rather to be given at Year-End only when truly warranted.



Ann at Edward Weston House on Wildcat Hill.

Ann Jastrab, Executive director of the Center for Photographic Art, judged our Image-of-the-Year review. All placing images from monthly competitions throughout our 2024 Club Year were reviewed one more time to select the very best of the best. *Thank you, Ann*, for your fine work.

Competition points are awarded to members whose images place in our monthly competitions. A 1st place is worth 4 points, a 2nd 3 points, a 3rd, 2 points and an honorable mention 1 point. For the 2024 Club Year, the high-point winners were:

In the Red Group

Brian Spiegel (25) - Sara Courtneidge (18)
Brooks Leffler (18) - David Eisen (9)

In the Green Group

Ken Jones (25) - Carol Fuessenich (17)
Sandie McCafferty (16) - Lillie Grossman (15)

In the Blue Group

Chris Johnson (28) - John Drum (21)
Carol Silveira (20) - Julie Chen (16)



Overall Image-of-the-Year
Julie Chen for her Pictorial "Picking up Sticks."

Club Year 2024 Image of the Year Category Winners by Color Group

Pictorial

Red Group



“Water Drop Sparkle”
Brian Spiegel

Blue Group



“Picking Up Sticks”
Julie Chen

Green Group



“Icelandic Waterfall”
Bill Sherwchuk

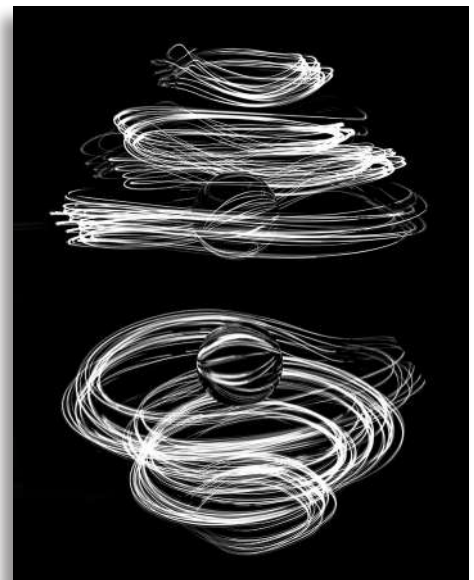
Creative

Combined Red &
Green Groups



“Lights and the Night”
Carol Fuessenich

Blue Group



“Swirly Reflections”
Chris Johnson

Club Year 2024 Image of the Year Category Winners by Color Group

Travel

Red Group



"The Salk Institute, La Jolla"
Sara Courtneidge

Green Group



"Cypress Trees, Caddo Lake, Texas"
Bill Shewchuk

Blue Group



"Hiking Into the Storm"
Joni Zabala

Nature

Red Group



"Mushroom Caught in Light"
Brian Spiegel

Green Group



"Brown Pelicans - Dawn Patrol"
Ken Jones

Blue Group



"Taiwan Barwing in Wild Berries"
Julie Chen

November 20th: Open Nature Competition Winners

Judged by Ray Hennessy

Ray Hennessy's fascination with nature photography began in 2007. Wildlife photography, with a focus on birds, has gone from a hobby to an equally passionate career. Ray spends much of his free time in natural areas searching for birds and any other wildlife that comes along. He concentrates on using creative natural lighting and interesting compositions to capture unique images of common and rare wildlife.



His favorite style is a more scenic photo that includes some of the habitat wildlife lives in. He also enjoys passing along the knowledge and experience that he has gathered over the years to other photographers who are eager to learn. Ray has had the privilege of working with students both in person and remotely from all over the world to help guide them and accelerate the techniques and refinement of their wildlife photography.

About this competition:

Nature photography is the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, in such a fashion that a viewer will be able to identify the subject material and recognize its honest presentation. The visual message of the photograph is considered more important than the technical considerations but high image quality is essential. This nature competition has no direction as to subject matter giving our members freedom to photograph the subject of their choice.

November 20th Open Nature Winners

Group Blue



1st "Sleeping Sea Lions"
Carol Silveira



HM "Brandt's Cormorant"
Sara A Courneidge



2nd "Common Raven"
Sara A Courneidge



HM "Japanese White-eye in Plum flowers"
Julie Chen



3rd "Great Egret in Flight"
Julie Chen



HM "Mt Whitney from Alabama Hills"
Lillie Grossman

November 20th Open Nature Winners

Group Green



1st "Ragweed at Fort Ord"
Jared Ikeda



3rd "South African small-spotted Genet
inside Tree Burrow"
Karen Schofield



2nd "Red Maple"
Charlie Gibson



HM "Gull Feather in Gut Weed"
Sandie McCafferty



HM "Coyote in Yosemite"
Sandie McCafferty

November 20th Open Nature Winners

Group Red



1st "St. Mary Lake Spring"
Rick Verbanec



2nd "White Tailed Kite"
Dick Light



3rd "River Slalom to Little Qualicum Falls"
Rick Verbanec



HM "Alium Globemaster"
Dick Light



HM "Sacred Lotus in South Korea"
Andrea Madsen

Members' Shout-out Achievements Beyond PTCC



Many of our members' images are showing up in publications throughout the Peninsula and beyond. It's hard to keep track of all the successes. We'd like to show every member's success outside Club activities, so if editors or judges pick one of your images for publication, please let our editorial staff know so we can shout out to you too.

This time we're shouting out to *Sara Courtneidge*, *Chris Johnson*, and *Rick Verbanec* for having their images selected to appear in the *2025 Elkhorn Slough Calendar*. The five images shown on the right and below will be featured either as full page (Month), inside cover, or inset images.



"Black Phoebe Fly Fishing Off the Dock"
Sara Courtneidge



"Oak Tunnel"
Sara Courtneidge



"Turkey Vulture and Northern Harrier Mixing it Up"
Sara Courtneidge



"Fun Day Kayaking"
Chris Johnson



"Did You Come to See Me?"
Rick Verbanec



"Fantom and Onyx"
Sara Courtneidge

Proving conclusively that there are no geographical limits to the appreciation of a well-taken image, Sara Courtneidge's "Fantom and Onyx" of two beautiful Belgian Shepherds, right, will appear in the *Belgian Shepherd Dog Club of Canada 2025 calendar*.

Also, *Andrew Tronick* had *seven* of his images of the *Carmel Padres* championship game printed in the December 20-26 issue of the *Carmel Pine Cone*.



The Truth of the Matter Un-confusing Nature Submissions

by Ken Jones for
Vacationing Carol Fuessenich

I had a bit of an epiphany the other day when reading through the PSA website's judges' guide for images submitted to their Nature Division. Nature and wildlife competitions seem to have been a source of confusion and frustration for members over the years. The root of all this angst is most likely the seemingly narrow definitions and restrictions expressed by PSA. While our Club competitions are not PSA recognized salons, PTCC has traditionally tried to adhere to PSA guidelines for consistency. And this is a good thing in the case of nature and wildlife images, because doing so forces us to think about more than composition, exposure, and focus. We must also consider the eligibility of the subject in the natural world, the story being told, and the truth of the image we're about to create.



If we are to follow PSA regarding the truth of our nature images, our images must capture appropriate nature subjects, not be altered to add or remove image elements, not have applied vignettes, replaced or blurred backgrounds. Simply stated, keep it true.

We must also consider the circumstances under which the image may be captured. For instance, is any evidence of human activity *not* essential to the nature story being told? A barn owl needs a barn, but a running deer doesn't need a power pole.

Once we have the image, our processing steps should not degrade the truth of it. This is not a complicated idea, and as long as we keep the truth of the image foremost, the rest will come naturally.

PSA has special requirements for wildlife images in that subjects in this category must be living free in the natural or adopted habitat of their choosing. They must not be removed from that habitat or staged for the purpose of photography. Again, simply stated, keep it true.

Carol will return in the 1st Quarter Newsletter.

Padre Trails Camera Club

Meetings: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 7:00PM - 9:00PM
Currently via Zoom

All Officers and Activity Chairs can be reached via email at: info@padretrailscc.org

Membership information can be found here:
www.padretrailscc.org/ptcc/ptccmembership.html

2024 - 2025 Officers

President - *Ken Jones*
Vice President - *John Drum*
Secretary - *Dick Light*
Treasurer - *Judi Clayton*

Activity Chairs

Awards & Hospitality - *Chris Johnson*
Competitions - *John Drum and Bill Brown*
Judge Coordination - *Joni Zabala*
Media Relations - *Bill Brown*
Membership - *Chris Johnson*
Newsletter (Acting) - *Ken Jones*
Publicity - *Amy Sibiga*
Points Accounting - *Carol Fuessenich*
Star-rating Accounting - *Rick Verbanec*
Submission Review - *Bill Brown, Jared Ikeda, and Brooks Leffler*
Website - *Jared Ikeda*



Member Club Since 1948



Upcoming Competition Submission Dates

All competition submissions are due by midnight.

- Sunday, January 26th: Pictorial - Night Photography
- Sunday, February 23rd: Nature - Macro
- Sunday, March 30th: Environmental Portrait

Key 1st Quarter Events Pop-Up Challenges, Group Shoots and Scavenger Hunts

Full year's schedule available at our website: Member Resources

Bonfire at Asilomar Group Shoot - January 11th
Sand City Murals Scavenger Hunt - February
"Favorite Photos" Pop Up - March date TBA

Group Shoot & Pop Up details
will be sent out well in advance of the event.