(Best of the Year)
"Where Fear Resides" by Michele McCain

Poly's Best Images for 2015 (page 4)

CONTENTS

News and Views of Poly Photo Camera Club Members
April, 2016   Volume 7, No.3

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS AND COLUMNS

From the Editor

This month, we don't have a specific *"Featured Photographer,"* there are many. We have the "best" work from the whole club. These are the images from what we did in 2015, those that received the awards at our annual Awards Luncheon.

Use them for inspiration and information, but don't be intimidated by them. Next year (or next month) there will be different opinions by different judges, and if Poly is doing its job at all, you will be a better photographer.

This month, we also get to publish a seldom-used feature that I would like to have much more often. We have a *letter to the editor*. Publications love to have their readers involved and providing feedbacks; whether they are opinion, agreement, new information, disagreement, complaint or anything else. We love them all! And we publish them all!

Thanks Ernesto, for getting this ball rolling again; and the rest of you, let's keep it rolling.

Most of you know that lately, I have been interested in how advances in camera technology and post-processing capabilities are letting us do things that we only dreamed about before, and are helping to make us better artists. I ran across an interesting camera capability this month.

How often have you envied giant, high-resolution prints from photo artists like Peter Lik? But none of us has an 80-megapixel Phase One IQ3 camera (about $60,000) like he and other modern landscape photographers often use.

Of course, there are many "stitch-together" approaches with manual or automatic camera position indexing to take a series of images that can be combined for pseudo high-resolution with post-processing software. But the end-to-end work-flow gets too complex to use on any regular basis.

How would like to have a small, $1200 camera that produces an 80-megapixel raw image? The new Olympus Pen-F can do just that.

It is an interchangeable-lens camera with a basic 20.3-megapixel, 4/3 sensor. In its high-resolution mode, it automatically shoots eight images, covering different parts of the scene, in a matrix approach. The synchronized array is combined by the camera's internal software, and the output is a single, 80-megapixel image file. So now you can give your inner Peter Lik a trial run (after you manage to learn the printing techniques).

I've said it before, *"It's a photographer's right to complain about the judge(s) for the last competition or exhibition."* But your complaints may usually be pretty non-serious if you got a couple of "nines." That's probably because high scores are an affirmation of our skills (by an expert, no less). But the judge can just as often be out-of-sync with what we think is good.

In the literature about creativity in photography and the other arts, one of the things we most often hear repeated is, *"To produce great art in photographs (or paintings or sculpture or anything else), you should picture the subjects you like in the style that you like, and forget about the viewer."* That's a safe viewpoint. But recently, I've read a few authors who say we need to consider who the art is for.

I know, that's "heresy." But I've come around to see their point of view. I think we most often fail in exhibitions and competitions not because we submit bad pictures, but because we submit the wrong images. Here are two examples to think about:

1. Poly Competition – images viewed for a few seconds for the judge to decide on a score. Need to be high-impact, saturated colors, strong subject, no thoughtful, quiet analysis. No control of presentation.
2. Popular Print Gallery – often exhibitions of a single theme. Happy and/or pretty images viewers will like (and buy). Sense of place, subtlety, mood, quiet contemplation are often good. Viewed only as prints. Presentation is important.

You can see there are many good images from (2) that might not suceed in (1) and vice-versa. There are many more unstated requirements for differen events. Sometimes we mix them up and don't succeed. If you want to compete, you do need to think about where your images belong.

Musings from the President

This month I have a challenge for you, but first:

Scott Kelby's "*Shoot like a Pro: Reloaded! Tour*" is coming to San Diego on May 12. If you've been to any of these energetic day-long workshops, you'll know how fun and informative they are. However, what happens to the Workbook you receive and the notes you take after getting home? Is everything filed away or do you take the time to review and try some of the tips you've spent $80, $90 or $100 to learn? What about Poly workshops? Online tutorials? Other?

This can be likened to learning to drive with a stick shift vs automatic. Can you remember what that was like? Time, patience and practice are essential ingredients for learning anything new. In this fast-paced world of electronics, we want instant results. To the rescue are plug-ins and special effects programs. Do you want a reflection? A "glow-ier" sunset? Open the plug-in and press a button. Wouldn't it be a source of pride to learn how to do these things in the editing program you already have? This is not to say that plug-ins are bad, a waste of money, or will corrupt your brain. It's that much of what they do can be accomplished in Photoshop if you learn how.

Lynda.com is a fantastic source of information for using Photoshop, Lightroom and other programs. But, it's not enough to WATCH a tutorial – it must be PRACTICED. That means taking time to make notes and then trying out the new technique. Currently, I'm watching a 3-hour tutorial on Blend Modes by Deke McClellan. There is so much more to Blend Modes than just making an image lighter (Screen) or darker (Multiply). It's a valuable tool for compositing images.

OK – back to my challenge. Pick an aspect of Photoshop you don't understand well or know how to use such as Blend Modes, Channels or Curves. Find a tutorial online, in a book or magazine, from a friend, or get a 30-day FREE trial to Lynda.com. Focus on that one point. Work on it until you're comfortable with implementing it in an image. If you can teach another member, then you've LEARNED it!

If this challenge is accepted, please let me know the outcome. You will find that mastering an editing tool that has been a "mystery" will give a wonderful sense of empowerment. And, you just might be asked to share your newfound knowledge in a future workshop!

Happy Editing!
-dee

2016 San Diego County Fair Entries are Due Even Sooner!
Second Reminder

Mad About the Fair

Time is running out! Your digital entries are due by April 16 for this year's exhibition.

Mounted and matted prints of accepted pictures will need to be delivered to the Photography exhibition space on May 17 or 18.

For entry categories, additional information and conditions, and specifications for entry, go to the fair web site at:
http://www.sdfair.com/index.php?fuseaction=exhibits.photo

Poly's Best of the Year – 2015

   Each year Poly selects the best of the images that have been entered in monthly competition by a two step process. First, each competing Photographer selects eight of his/her accepted pictures from the year's monthly competitions that he/she thinks are his/her best and submits them for the Year-end Judging. He/she also submits Project firsts or seconds. All the images images are then judged by a Three-judge panel to select the best of Open, Project, Nature, and Creativity.

   Each Spring, Poly has a Presentation Luncheon, at which the awards for the *"best of. . ."* are presented. There are also awards for "high total points" score for the year, to recognize members who have a consistent high level of performance. Finally, all the submitted images are collected and presented in a "slide show" so the attendees get to see everyone's best work.

   The following pictures are the top award selections.

Best of the Year – Open Category
"Where Fear Resides"
by Michele McCain
(full size on the cover)

Best of the Year – Project
Illusion – *"Stripes"*
By Dan Palermo

Second Place – Open   *"Tomorrow and Forever"*   By Michele McCain

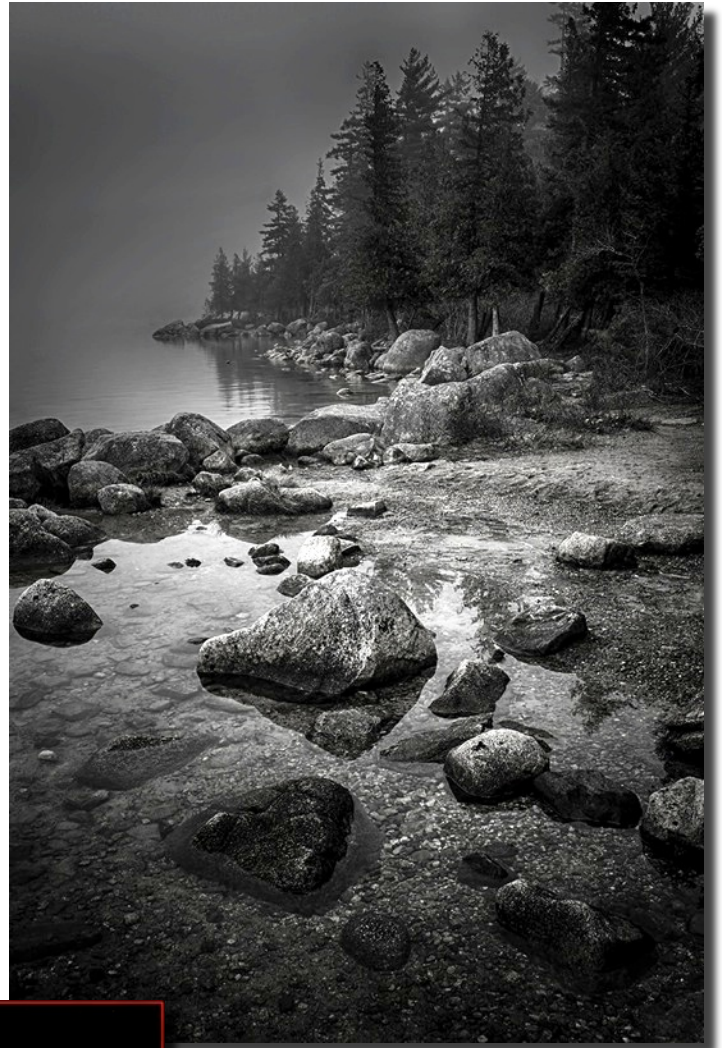**Second Place** – Project   *"Low Light"*   by Ernesto Corte

Third Place – Open   *"Mountain Storm"*   by Dee Elwin

Third Place – Project   *"Night Lights"*   by Mary Anderson

Best Nature Image
"Foggy Day at Jordan Pond"
by Dee Elwin

Most Creative Image
"A Touch of Bubbly"
by Bill Godwin-Austen

This and That
By Clark Winsor

It seems that there is more interest in the Interclub Competitions this year than in the past. Along with that interest, members are asking questions about the Interclub Competition. This month, with the help of Robin Stern, we will explore the history of the Interclub Competitions, and explain how they work now.

First we'll look at the history. When I joined Poly in 1996, we were a color slide club. We projected from a stand setup in the back of the projection room. The projectionist would separate the entries by the scores given. When the judging was over, the projectionist would reload the slide tray separating the 7's, 8's and 9's. The project winners, and the 1st and 2nd place images would be projected last. We still do the same thing now, except it's all done on a computer.

Before digital, picking images for Interclub Competition was very different from the way Poly does it now. The Poly Interclub Chairman would pick Poly's entries from the accepted images. He would close both doors to the projection room, and with a couple of handpicked helpers, he would select the images he wanted. After that was done, he notified the owners of the selected slides that he would have them for a while. The rest of the slides were returned to the owners.

Having one or more of your slides selected did not necessarily mean it would be entered immediately into the next Interclub competition. The decision to enter or hold for a future competition was made by the Poly Interclub Chairman, based on the variations of subjects and how many images he had selected to submit.

If he or she didn't attend the judging, a member never knew if he or she won at interclub until the ribbons were handed out. It still works that way today, and I believe Robin Stern (the SCACC Interclub Chairperson) will make future Interclub operations more open and accessible to all clubs and their members.

From Robin Stern:

Poly, Photonaturalists, Fallbrook, and Darkroomers currently participate. Images are chosen in the four participating clubs by any method they choose. Each club submits their entries, ten per competition. We have interclub competitions four times a year. There are three judges who come together at the Photo Arts Building on these interclub dates to judge 40 images, ten for each of the four clubs for each of the months. We try to get judges who are not members of any of the clubs, but that is not always possible. Many of the judges used by each club also voluntarily judge for interclub.

In Poly, Byron Aughenbaugh (our Interclub Chairman) chooses the interclub submissions from the digital images entered in our monthly competitions. The allowable ten images are sent digitally to Mike Wilson (the SCACC Interclub projectionist) who compiles them for each judging. The best images and honorable mentions get ribbons that are distributed to the individual photographers at a regular club meeting.

Once yearly, we have another judging to pick the SCACC Best of the Year images from the awarded quarterly pictures. We utilize judges from the Photographic Society of America, of which SCACC is a member. This year, the end of the year judging took place on Saturday, March 26. SCACC's big end of year Awards Event is scheduled for April 23 to present the awards for 2015. It will be from 9:00AM to 12:00 in the Photo Arts Building, and you are all welcome to come.

Letters to the Editor
(Actually emails, of course)

The article in *"This and That"* of the March issue is a well-intentioned article, but unfortunately is not factual and based on incorrect premises.

It implies that our club has been running one of its key competition activities without established written rules. It states that this is the case because "There are no written rules for Project Competition" in the Bylaws.

It later adds "We have no written history of this competition." And after listing a detailed set of rules for the Project Competition, we read that the quoted rules are being passed down by word of mouth.

Well, let's look at the facts. Our club is a great club and we are not that loosely run. The Project Competition rules are clearly spelled out *in writing* in the Competition Rules document available to all members on Poly's website. This document is also provided to every new member upon joining the club. It was provided to me when I joined Poly ten years ago, so I can attest that the rules have been in *written form* for at least ten years.

As for the argument that the project competition rules must be in the bylaws in order to be applied, that is a misguided approach. In a club involved with fast changing technology, detailed rules should not be embedded in the bylaws. Once there, they will not get easily updated because of the cumbersome process of changing bylaws.

Here is what the Foundation Group recommends for nonprofit private organization's bylaws.

"DO: Stick to the basics. It is a good practice to think of your bylaws much like the US Constitution. …….Your bylaws should deal with only the highest levels of governing issues….."

"DON'T: Treat your bylaws as a policy and procedure manual….. Create a separate policy manual for management purposes."

With that in mind, I do hope that our Club is not going to rush into changing the bylaws to incorporate a set of competition rules that are clearly spelled out in a document created for that specific purpose, and that has served the club well for many years. We just need to periodically remind the membership of what the rules are and where to find them. Inserting them in the bylaws will not help those who do not bother to learn about rules or those with occasional memory lapses—a not unusual occurrence for those of us in my age group…..

Finally, upon reflection, all this looks like "Much ado about nothing".

The recent issue of an "honest mistake" in Project Competition entry was deftly resolved by our President based on the existing written rules. No need now to make changes just to attempt to rationalize opposing views.

Before hastening into changing the bylaws with all the resulting implications let's reflect upon it and adopt Augustus Caesar's favorite saying:

"FESTINA LENTE" meaning: "Make Haste Slowly"

Ernesto Corte

Programs and Coming Events
Sue Cerise

April 2 - Competition
April's Project Theme is "Zoom the Lens"

Here's another chance to exercise the right side of our brains this month as we invent new ways to use our zoom lenses – or even a more creative approach with a prime lens.

Our judge for this month will be **Eileen Mandell.** Here's a little about her from Barbara:

After almost 30 years of teaching Photography, as well as creating the Digital Arts program and curriculum for an East County school district, and loving it, Eileen Mandell decided to retire to concentrate fulltime on her own photography.

Eileen began her photographic life as a black and white photographer, spending hours in the traditional photographic darkroom. Photography is always the source— the seed of her ideas. She loves capturing detail, and showing the beauty of nature.

"With a background in art, I tend to look for shapes, lines and patterns.
I search for the play of light and shadow."

Eileen Mandell is an award-winning photographic artist, well-known for her nature photography, including landscapes and nightscapes, as well as innovative work with alternative photographic processes and media.

She just finished exhibiting her night sky photographs at Gallery 21 in Spanish Village, and a selection of her work will be on display at the City and Luxe Galleries at City College in mid-March. The Rancho Baja Artist Retreat (bajaranchoart.com) at Baja Rancho La Bellota in the Guadalupe Valley in Baja Mexico has asked Eileen to lead a photography workshop there June 2-5 that will include landscape, stampeding horses, and night sky photography.

You can see some of her work on her web site at: www.eileenmandell.com or at Fine Art America at eileen-mandell.fineartamerica.com.

April 16 – Workshop
In the Photo Arts Building @ 9:30AM.

Jim Mildice will present a workshop that will teach you about using *"Stacks"* in post-processing with Photoshop. A Photoshop *stack* is a group of interrelated layers that are imported into a single image and have been derived from a series of related camera images. (Each separate image becomes a single layer that helps make up the final picture.)

Manipulation of a *stack* allows us to surmount classical photography limitations that we have all fought with for our entire careers. Some of them are:

- Panoramic stacks for extreme, high-resolution wide-angles.
- HDR stacks to remove dynamic range limitations
- Focus stacks for "infinite" depth-of-field
- Averaging (and other mathematically combined) stacks for special effects
- Exclusion stacks for "tourist filtering"
- Others

April 30 – Photo Sharing
In the Photo Arts Building @ 9:30AM.

April is a five Saturday month. So we will take advantage of the extra meeting day to share some our work with each other. You can come to get some informal feedback, or to demonstrate and get comments or suggestions about something new you've been working on.