Los Gatos/Saratoga Camera Club Newsletter

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Reminders

Dues

Yearly membership fees are $50.00 and are due January 1, 2012. Membership will be dropped if renewal fees are not received by February 29, 2012.

2012 Executive Committee Meeting

There will be an Executive Committee Meeting at 7:30pm on Thursday, January 5 at the Saratoga Senior Center trailer at the corner of Allendale and Fruitvale in Saratoga.

All members are welcome to attend. Please let Rick know if you plan to attend so we can arrange seating.

First 2012 Print Show

Come visit our first show of 2012 at the Willow Glen Coffee Roasting Company, 1383 Lincoln Ave., San Jose!

•Tuesday, January 3rd, 7pm - Set up.

•January 4th - 31st - Images available for viewing.

•Sunday, January 8th - Reception at 3pm.

•Tuesday, January 31st - Removal

Coming Club Events

See the Events page or Event Calendar on our web site for updates or further details.

Saturday, December 31, 2011
Deadline for Entering Images for January Club Competition

Monday, January 02, 2012
Competition
PJ, Color, Monochrome
Refreshments - Steve Stark, Mike Story, Ari Strod
Judge - Jon Freilich

Tuesday, January 3-31, 2012
Exhibit at Willow Glen Coffee Roasting Company

Monday, January 16, 2012
Program - Photojournalism presented by Frederic Larson
Refreshments - Betty Toepfer, Doris Vutz, Peter Vutz

Wednesday, January 18, 2012
Deadline for emailing digital walk-ins for the January 6C competition
Travel, PJ, Color, Monochrome

Saturday, January 21, 2012
6C's Bi-Monthly Competition
Travel, PJ, Color, Monochrome
Walk-Ins and Winners from December & January Competitions.
9:15am Print Walk-Ins due
9:30am - 12:30pm Prints
1:30pm Projected Images

Carolyn Ramsay Award – 2011 Photographer of the Year Rick Whitacre

Presented by JoAn Lambert

It is my pleasure to present this year's Carolyn Ramsay Photographer of the Year Award. Carolyn, who was an extremely active and long-time member of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Camera Club passed away in 2006 leaving a monetary award "for the good of the club." Later in that year, at the suggestion of Marty Weisberg, the Board created this annual award in her honor.

While those of you relatively new to our club did not have the opportunity to know her, to many of us who worked with her, Carolyn stood for everything that a camera club member should be. She was an excellent award-winning photographer, as well as a judge locally, nationally and internationally for PSA, the Photographic Society of America. But more than that, it mattered greatly to her that our camera club not only survive, but thrive. If there was a job to do and no one to do it, Carolyn would step in. If there was an office open which no one else would fill, she would volunteer to step in. More than this she enjoyed mentoring people with photographic problems and using her many talents to assist as needed. This spirit of helpfulness extended beyond our LGSCC, to 6C's, to Northern California's Fotoclave, to PSA and even to a Canadian Photo conference. All in all, she set the standards of excellence both in photography and in service to our camera club.

Yearly now, a committee consisting of three former winners of the Carolyn Ramsay Award meet and consider the top three highest scoring competitors in our monthly club competitions for the year and their records of service to the club throughout their time in the club. Candidates must have held at least one officer position and have worked to help the club's operation. In 2006, the first award was made to Airdrie Kincaid, in 2007 to Don Schremp, in 2008 to Peggy Patterson, in 2009 to Betty Toepfer, and last year to me.

It is always difficult to pick the top candidate, but this year, one member really stood out, not only with his photography, but with his constant service to the club. Though relatively new to this camera club, his photography has been outstanding both technically and creatively. His willingness to help is exemplified by his taking on leadership roles when asked, in stepping in when a job needs doing and in being always available to problem-solve when necessary. He has been associated with programs, field trips and workshops, assisting at 6C's as needed and can be seen welcoming visitors and new members to the club. He has even been known on many occasions to help vacuum when everyone else has gone home leaving only the hospitality committee to finish up. No doubt with these many talents, there will be other opportunities awaiting him in the future as he strives constantly to improve our camera club.

Please join me now in honoring Rick Whitacre as the recipient of the 2011 Carolyn Ramsay Photographer of the Year.

End of Year and Monthly Competition Winners Tell Us How They Did It

We asked each of the makers of the December first place images, along with the makers of the 2011 Print of the Year and Digital Image of the Year, to send stories about what their image was, how it was made, and when, where, and why it was taken. Clicking a winning image will take you to a larger version on our web site.

2011 Digital Image of the Year

Reflective Pussy Willows
Rebecca Smith-Coggins

This photo is a nontraditional portrait of my sister, Debbie. As homework for the Visual Design Workshop taught by Virginia Scott last spring, we were to utilize a geometric shape in our image. The oval-shaped mirror in our bedroom served as a perfect subject. In the reflection, I put a vase of pussy willows next to the mantle with a picture of my sister on it. I worked on the lighting to provide a more dramatic effect. (Nikon D700 with ISO 2000, F 4.0, 1/80).

Pussy willows were a favorite of my sister's and we always have a vase of them to keep her memory alive since she was the victim of a violent crime at age 26. The distance that one feels within the image represents how removed she has been for all those who knew her.

Winning the "2011 Digital Image of the Year" award was an emotional moment for me not only for the honor of it among such talented photographers but also because the subject matter is near to my heart. Thank you for this opportunity to shed some light on her life.

2011 Print of the Year

Golden Gate Bridge And Full Moon
Bambi Cask

I've been very fortunate to join Don Schremp on several night/full-moon photo trips. We arrived at the Marin Headlands at just the right time to capture the full moon over the North Tower of the Golden Gate Bridge. The Golden Gate Bridge is always beautiful to photograph, and the long exposure combined with the moon peeking through the moving clouds created the beautiful sweep of colors above it.

Canon 50D with Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L lens (ISO 100, 10sec, f9, 34mm), 5/27/10

December 2011 First Place Travel Print

Morning Commute via Blue Taxi, Havana, Cuba
Mary Ellen Kaschub

I find that travel photography is always a bit chance, preparation, opportunity and the ability to respond quickly to what's going on around you. I was out early one morning in old Havana to see what I could get in morning light. I came to this street corner, one block off the Malecon seawall. The side light was beautiful, reflected on the old colonial buildings. I thought what a great spot, now all I need is the right car.

I waited, shot a few to get a feel of the speed cars traveled, and finally the classic 1940-something blue taxi appeared. I was ready! I'd seen and admired that car before and I was excited to catch the shot, at the right place and at the right time! I love this image's simplicity with the flavor and the energy of Old Havana.

December 2011 First Place Monochrome Print

This photograph was taken during a recent Lindblad / National Geographic Expedition to the Antarctic. The National Geographic Explorer was proceeding through the Lemaire Channel, and my wife and I were on the bridge of the ship.

The light started looking very good so I ran to get my Nikon D700 with a 28-300mm lens. I went to the bow of the ship to take the photo. The exposure was 1/320 sec, f/8, ISO 200, 45mm focal length, hand held. It was taken at 9:40PM, and the sun set at 10:40PM. The image was processed with minimal adjustments using Lightroom. Monchrome conversion was done with Nik Silver Efex Pro 2. The ship encountered heavy ice just before exiting the channel, and we were forced to turn around.

On this trip I took a lot of lenses, but I quickly concluded the best choice was the 28-300mm lens on the D700 for landscape and wildlife, and a D300S with a 70-200mm lens and 1.4XTC for birds in flight. While other lens choices could give better results the need to shoot quickly and the difficulty changing lenses in adverse weather favored the 28-300mm lens.

Lemaire Channel, Antarctica
Larry Rosier

December 2011 First Place Travel Digital Projected Image

Playing Sidewalk Chess in Havana, a popular pass time in Cuba
Mary Ellen Kaschub

Old cars and crumbling colonial buildings are the backdrop, yet it's the energy and the people that make visiting Cuba especially rich and wonderful. Cubans have very little and live multi-generationally in small, cramped spaces. Thus much of life is lived on the streets in a very communal way. Games of our-yesterday are played on the streets. Chess, checkers and domino competitions executed on boards balanced on knees. Concentration is intense.

Walking down the street one late afternoon, I spied this particular game with the man leaning on his cane watching from the doorway. They didn't look up; it was a great photojournalist moment!

December 2011 First Place Monochrome Digital Projected Image

Launch For Hire
Don Schremp

This picture was taken in Inverness near Point Reyes National Seashore. I was on a one day family outing to the Point Reyes area with the ultimate goal of getting to the lighthouse for sunset. We had spent too much time at the visitor center and other spots so that we were rushing to try and get to the lighthouse. On the way, I saw this old pier and thought there might be a good picture.

I was tempted to continue on to the goal but decided to make a quick stop. When I went back to take the picture, I did not immediately see how to capture an image that reflected what I saw as we drove by in the car. I was disappointed and given the hurry I was in, I almost just left. Studying the scene a little more, I thought maybe I could crop to a panorama and decided to setup and take a shot anyway.

I set up to get as long of exposure as I could, around 30 seconds, to smooth out the water. Knowing I would crop the top and bottom, I roughly leveled the camera to minimize the distortion of the wide angle lens in the central pier area.

I took one picture, checked the histogram and left. I did not think I had really gotten anything until I studied the image on my computer.

Sometimes the first fleeting instinct of what will make a good image is right on, it just takes awhile for the conscious analytical processing to catch up. In the end, we did not make it to the lighthouse in time for even a twilight picture.

With the fog rolling in, the picture at the lighthouse was uncertain anyway. I was happy to have a potential picture in the bag rather than pass it by and end up with nothing.

December 2011 First Place Pictorial/Color Digital Projected Image - Advanced

Last Light Strikes Wizard Island - Crater Lake National Park
Rick Whitacre

On my recent trip touring the parks of the Northwest, I stopped at Crater Lake National Park right after an early snow storm. The snow closed the rim trail and made most hiking impossible. I decided to try to make the best of it by getting a sunset shot of the lake with all the fresh snow.

The weather was not cooperating, though. There were a lot of clouds with few breaks. I had found some nice snow-covered trees to frame Wizard island and settled in to wait for the light. Right before sunset, I experienced something I had never seen (or realized) before. A break in the clouds allowed the setting sun to illuminate the clouds directly above Wizard Island, but not the island itself. The warm glow on the island is actually from the cloud above it and not from the sun directly. I think this gives the image an ethereal quality and makes it somewhat different.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, Canon 24-105mm, f/4.0L at 40mm, ISO200, 1/20sec at f/8.0

December 2011 First Place Pictorial/Color Digital Projected Image - Basic

Cupertino Bridge at Sunset
Jim Katzman

This evening shot of the new bridge in Cupertino was done a few weeks ago when three club members went out on a photo shoot specifically to get this bridge at sunset. It was taken with my Cannon 5D Mark II. It was shot on a tripod: 0.3sec exposure at f 5.0, ISO 200 at 58mm with an EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM lens.

The moon was shot the same night in the eastern part of the sky and it was full. I used Lightroom and Photoshop for post-processing and dropped the moon into the photo and removed the telephone wires at the end of the bridge with the content-aware fill capabilities of the healing brush in CS5.

Most of the beauty of this photo came from the bridge and its lighting. I just happened to be there to capture it!

December 2011 First Place Color Print - Advanced

Spider Web Jewelry
John Perry

My winning pictorial photograph was taken in my Rinconada Hills backyard. Rinconada Hills common area has a plethora of photo opportunities. There is a lake, three ponds, two waterfalls, lots and lots of flowers and trees with fall colors. The water features attract many different type of wildlife, i.e. herons, egrets, coots, ducks, coyote's, hawks, and deer.

Generally after I take my dogs for their 7am walk I go back out with my camera and shoot whatever strikes my fancy. This particular morning (30 Nov) it was very foggy with a high dew point temperature and I was out practicing with my 150mm macro lens. You know, shooting things like dewy fall colored leaves on dead tree stumps, big water droplets on tree branches, and flowers.

Upon returning home I spotted this spider web in a small apple tree. I guess you would call this serendipity. I took 6 photos of the web 3 from one side and 3 from the other. My camera settings were ISO200, f/20, at 1/5 sec. There is no post processing except a little cropping.

December 2011 First Place Color Print - Basic

This image was taken at He'eia State Park, Oahu, on a bright, rainy day. All the flowers were beautiful and covered in rain drops. The plumeria were up fairly high, so I was shooting towards the sky. Unfortunately, that meant a lot of bright light was peeking through the branches around the flowers.

I was able to use Photoshop to eliminate most of the bright areas by applying the burn and copy/paste tools. I wasn't able to completely reduce the white areas in the upper right without making it look unnatural, so I settled for significant, but not total, light reduction in that area.

Canon EOS 50D with Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L lens (ISO-100, 1/640sec, f6.3, 70mm)

Plumeria Blooms
Bambi Cask

Meet Gary Marcos

I am a native of San Francisco, being born and raised in the Sunset District. After high school I went to U.C. Berkeley with a major in Computer Science and then to a job in Silicon Valley. One of the advantages of growing up in this area was to be part of and to see major transformations that have taken place in the world because of computing and the ease of electronic communications.

I've worked on the Apple II, mainframes, mini-computers and PCs and have been part of those revolutions in the industry. More recently, we are seeing another transformation taking place due to mobile computing, social platforms and new devices such as tablet computers so these are exciting times.

I became interested in photography while in college, but the interest grew as I did more foreign travels as part of business and personal interest. My inspiration was my father who introduced me to photography. His kit included Leicas, Olympus and Canon and his favorite photography was of flowers. Of course, all of his work was in slides and film, most of which I still have. He would have enjoyed the new digital era.

Personally, I am motivated by telling a story through photographs and documenting a place and time. If I had to pick an inspirational photographer, I would choose Ansel Adams as he combined art, passion, science and dedication into producing beautiful photographs. He would have been an interesting person to meet and know.

Most of what I have learned in photography is through the LGSCC via classes. Club members have been generous of their time and I've taken classes on Lightroom, CS5 and matting. Also the field trips, judge's comments and program speakers have been very helpful. While I have lots of books and magazines on the subject, I find myself not having the time to read them or not to the depth I want. Unfortunately, my appetite for books and reading material exceeds my ability to actually read those that I buy. Putting me in a bookshop is like putting a hungry person in a supermarket.

My career has always been in some area of software for computing systems. From networking, to network/systems management, high availability, graphical user interfaces, Internet Security and then to a unique opportunity to combine my interest in photography and digital imaging while working at HP. I was one of a team from HP Labs responsible for producing an online photo hosting site similar to Snapfish (www.snapfish.com).

If you ever print at Costco, you are using some of the solution that was developed by my team. It was one of the highlights of my career and gave me free access to prints of almost any size (no, I don't have access anymore) so as you can imagine it was not only a profession, but a lot of fun.

Eventually, I retired from HP was freed up to pursue my other interests. At that point, I found the Los Gatos-Saratoga Camera Club and joined. After one year in the club, I became President and found it to be a great learning opportunity. One very pleasant discovery was the high level of interest in travel and exploration. Our club will go anywhere for a shot!

The other learnings were on the different interests in Photography. For example, some enjoy the processing side such as in Lightroom or Photoshop, others the composition aspects of a shot, or star photography or macro, or printing. Our club has it all. More recently, I've been VP in charge of Field Trips and next year will be VP for Membership.

My other hobbies include: Cycling (road and mountain biking), running, wine making, Chicago Blues, Argentine Tango, traveling and trekking. I like all kinds of photography but enjoy travel, creative, portraits, architecture. I have traveled to Africa, Nepal, India, Europe, Central America, a little bit in the USA. My next trip will be to Turkey for three weeks.

Attached is an image that I took on a recent vineyard harvest event, which combines my interest in photography and wine making. We were picking Cabernet grapes when I saw one of the crew looking at me through the vines. I could not resist but to swing up my Canon 50D and take the picture. I'm looking forwards to continued learning through the club and enjoying the relationships and friendships with club members.

Happy New Year!

Key Contacts

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