

# Bits & Pixels

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[www.padretrailsccl.org](http://www.padretrailsccl.org)

## Human Hand in Nature Winning Images — Group Blue



1<sup>st</sup> "Great Blue Heron Lands on Sculpture - Palo Corona Park"  
*Dennis Giuffre*

The Human Hand in Nature category was put in place several years ago to allow members to submit nature images which, because they might include some human-created element, would be outside the *Photographic Society of America* nature definition. The category is still evolving for us. In this issue, you'll see the winning nature images that highlight the beauty of nature but include some evidence of the human presence.

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# Human Hand in Nature Winning Images

Group Blue



2<sup>nd</sup> "Red-shouldered Hawk on Post" *Kent VanVuren*



HM "Asilomar Boardwalk" *Carol Fuessenich*



HM "Lewis's Woodpecker" *Jeff Hobbs*



3<sup>rd</sup> "Western Scrub-Jay" *Chris Johnson*



HM "Loggerhead Shrike" *Jeff Hobbs*



## My Two Bits

### *Being Smart With Your Smartphone*

by Ken Jones

Communication today is easier than it's ever been. Most of us carry a device capable of communicating around the world with a simple click. I'm betting most people dash off texts and emails from our phones with little thought to grammar, capitalization, spelling, or structure – sometimes not even using words.



Almost everybody in the U.S. has a smartphone – 97% according to one source. That means that of the 300+ million people in the U.S., there are some 290 million people with smartphones on the streets every day. One or two smartphone users actually make phone calls, many millions are, among other things, taking pictures. But what type of pictures are they?

When something is this easy, it's also easy to get careless about using it. Serious writers often carefully craft what they write, even their emails, sometimes even their text messages. Likewise, serious photographers always consider the fundamentals, even when creating images with their handy smartphones. My concern is that the ease of pulling a smartphone from a pocket and grabbing a shot can, if we let it, make it just as easy to neglect the basics of capturing a good image.

Just a few hours of people-watching will show you that the majority of folks dash off selfies, lunch shots, wild videos, and party snaps with their phones – often with little thought given to composition, lighting, background, or any of the factors that go into a good photograph. Smartphones do so much for us that we can get a little lazy.

So, what to do? Probably the first step is to slow down a bit. Take time to pre-visualize the shot, and think about the basics when composing. Set guidelines “on” to help keep the composition level and to highlight the rule of thirds hotspots. Also, remember that touching the subject on the screen will refine the focal point and exposure. If we approach phone photography as carefully as we do when using a DSLR or mirrorless camera, the results will be more satisfying.

The Club's upcoming competition, the returns of which will be presented at our April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, is all about smartphone photography. The competition will follow all the rules that apply to Pictorial competitions, and is directed to “People” as the primary subject. It will be interesting to see how successful we are being smart with our smartphones by producing high-quality Pictorial images.

*Take your lens cap off...*

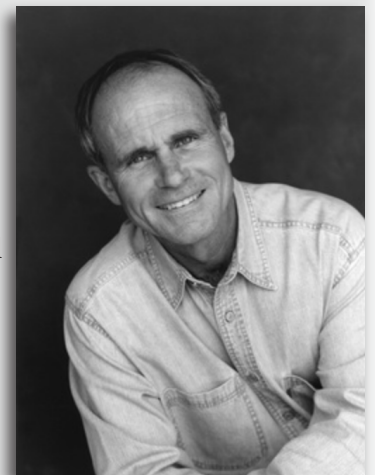
Ken

## Meet Doug Steakley, Judge for Human Hand in Nature Competition

Doug Steakley is a PTCC Pro-Member, and his distinct images range from the Monterey Peninsula where he lives to many international destinations where he enjoys traveling. Doug has led more than seventy-five photography tours and expeditions in the United States and abroad, including such destinations as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Teton National Parks. Doug's international tours include Nepal, Iceland, Myanmar, Mexico, Cuba, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, and Mongolia.

He has published three large format books featuring his color photography: *Pacific Light*, *Images of The Monterey Peninsula* in 2000, and *Big Sur and Beyond, The Legacy of The Big Sur Land Trust* in 2001. *Pacific Light* received an Honorable Mention from The National Outdoor Book Awards. More recently, *Big Sur Revealed*, was published in 2017.

Doug served two terms on the Board of Trustees of the Center For Photographic Art in Carmel, California, and was Treasurer for one term. He supports and works closely with several land conservation groups and his images have been included in annual reports and a variety of other publications by Big Sur Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Land Trust Alliance, the Trust For Public Land, the Wilderness Coalition, the Tuolumne River Trust, Western Rivers Conservancy, and the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. Learn more at: <http://www.douglassteakley.com/>



## In The Spotlight: *Julie Chen*

*Photos by Julie Chen, Text by Ken Jones & Julie Chen*



*Photo by J. Deely*

Julie Chen was born in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Her mother, a professional cake decorator, photographed her decorating work to promote her art, and this early exposure to the power of photography was likely what first piqued Julie's interest in photography. Julie began to photograph small animals found in her back yard. She developed a growing appreciation of the natural world, and studied biology in college, and completed a four-year intensive teacher training program.

After graduation, Julie taught biology in South Africa for four years, and then in 1993 left on an adventure teaching English in Taiwan.



"Share the Road"



Fish Lake, Utah

The kayak atop Julie's BMW serves as her primary wildlife photography platform.

There, in 1995, she met and married Eric Chen and started teaching English to his colleagues and managers in a fiber-optic component manufacturing company. Julie took her own wedding photographs with a tripod and self-timer as the couple was too poor to afford a professional photographer.

She was eventually hired full time by the company and she and Eric were both transferred to the United States in 1999 to head up the Branch Office in San Jose. A year after relocating to the States, their first son, Caleb, was born, and Julie bought a point and shoot Canon, her first digital camera.

The family moved to Simi Valley in 2001. During their time there, Julie taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science and biology at a private school, and served as principal there for three years. Their second son, Micah, was born there in 2005 after which Eric was transferred to the East Coast to be near a large account in Georgia.

The family chose to live in nearby Tennessee where they stayed for seven years and owned a small hobby farm. During these years, Julie's photography centered on her kids' sports and her love of nature. As her photo skills continued to develop, one of her nature images from this time was chosen as a centerfold feature in *National Wildlife* magazine.



## In The Spotlight: *Julie Chen* - Continued

*Photos by Julie Chen, Text by Ken Jones & Julie Chen*

The Chens returned to California in 2012 to settle in Salinas. Looking for a connection with other photographers in a club environment, Julie found and joined Padre Trails in 2013. During this time Julie and Eric continued to work together as a team: Eric on the engineering side, and Julie in sales. They travelled extensively for business and their children's sporting activities, and Julie had to leave PTCC due to the time constraints of job and a growing family.



"Jumping for Joy"



"Zebra Don't Have Horns"

Julie came back to PTCC to reconnect and continue to expand her skills in photo editing and refining. After shooting Canon for many years, she's recently switched to Sony mirrorless, using an a7RIII and an a7III, with a full range of lenses, from 16mm to 600mm. She frequently uses a 1.4x converter for birds and wildlife.



"Forster's Tern"

While still working full time in fiber optics, Julie is currently very involved with experimental fruit farming in Mozambique. Her goal is to find fruits that will grow well in the local climate without costly inputs of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. She plans to introduce these techniques to the local subsistence family farmers, giving them the opportunity to grow profitable cash crops. She employs composting, and controls pests and generates fertilizer with ducks and rabbits. Working in harmony with nature in this way helps create sustainable, and profitable, agricultural enterprises.

And, as if she's not busy enough, Julie takes advantage of her frequent trips to Mozambique to visit the many national parks in South Africa and Mozambique, and is currently working on a children's book based on one of her interactions with a baby hyena. She is using her many thousands of photographs of African wildlife to create magical composites to illustrate her story.

# Human Hand in Nature Winning Images

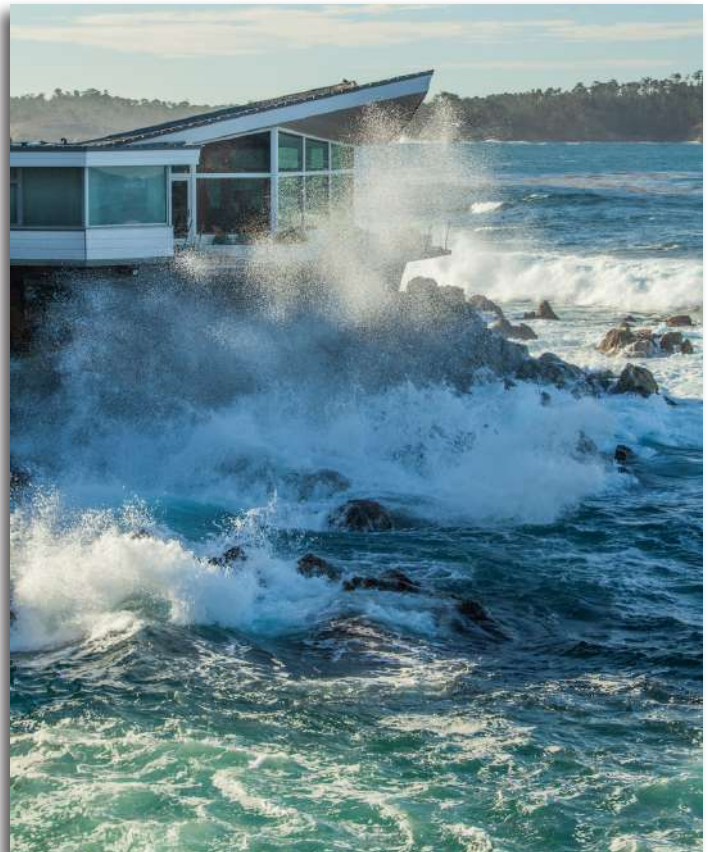
Group Green



1<sup>st</sup> "Dark-eyed Junco" *John Drum*



2<sup>nd</sup> "Soaking Succulent" *Charlie Gibson*



3<sup>rd</sup> "Coastal Challenge" *Joni Zabala*



# Human Hand in Nature Winning Images

Group Green



HM "Leucospermum from South Africa" *Andrea Madsen*



HM "Roots of Man and Nature" *Lillie Grossman*



HM "Red-winged Blackbird" *John Drum*

## Meeting Recap & Preview

### March & April

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, members enjoyed an Open Projector night featuring images of the abandoned businesses along the old road to Las Vegas taken by *Janet Beaty* in the St. George, Utah, area. Janet also shared images of giant murals on inactive silos in Salina, Kansas. Wildlife images were shared by new member, *Andrew Tronick*, and *Charlie Gibson* treated us with Laguna Seca Raceway images, and shots of car shows from the classics to modern lowrider masterpieces. *Ken Jones* showed his presentation of images of artwork by sculptor, *Seward Johnson*, taken during a visit to the Seward Johnson Center for the Arts in Hamilton, New Jersey.

At our second March meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>, we saw the returns of the Human Hand in Nature competition, judged by PTCC Pro-Member, *Doug Steakley*. Results of that judging are found on our website's Gallery pages and in this issue.

We'll begin April on the 6<sup>th</sup> with a very special visit from *Ann Jastrab*, Executive Director of the Center for Photographic Arts (CPA) in Carmel. See: <https://photography.org>



Ann has judged our competitions in the past, and will judge our upcoming Phone (People) competition. Images are to be taken with a smart-phone or other non-traditional camera device. The subject of this competition is directed to "People."

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, we'll see the returns of this unusual Pictorial competition, and hear Ann's comments and awards. It should be a very interesting evening.



### Upcoming 2022 Submission Dates

All competition submissions are due by midnight.

- Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>: Nature (Macro)
- Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>: Creative (Triptych)
- Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup>: Pictorial (Abandoned Places)
- Sunday, July 31<sup>st</sup>: Nature (Shorebirds)
- Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>: Travel



## Mini Spots & Shots

### Wilder Ranch State Park

*Photos and text by Ken Jones*

Wilder Ranch State Park is located off Highway 1 about 15 minutes north of Santa Cruz, on land originally the home of the Ohlone people for centuries.



In the late 1800s, *Deloss D. Wilder*, along with a partner, purchased just over 4,000 acres here and continued to expand the established dairy business on the property. In 1974, the land was acquired by the California State Parks System.



The rustic buildings, antique ranch and dairy equipment, animals, and rugged coastline all provide a trove of opportunities for creating compelling images.



The Club visited the Ranch on a field trip in 2013 and had a grand time. It's hoped that a return trip can be organized this year to take advantage of our increasing post-COVID (almost) freedom to move about the county. Fingers crossed.





# Human Hand in Nature Winning Images

Group Red



1<sup>st</sup> "Towhee on a Fence" *Jerry Loomis*



2<sup>nd</sup> "Fox Squirrel Lunch Break" *Frank Penner*



3<sup>rd</sup> "Over the Neighbor's Fence" *Carol Fuessenich*

# Human Hand in Nature Winning Images

Group Red

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HM "Brown Moth on Lawn Chair" *Jared Ikeda*



HM "Boardwalk onto Yellowstone" *Ken Jones*



HM "Acorn Woodpecker Stops for a Drink" *Christina Parsons*



## PSA Journal: A Treasure

by Carol Fuessenich

You have heard me say many times how much I enjoy the *PSA Journal*. Sadly, because we're meeting virtually now, the Club's copy isn't being shared among Club members. If you are a PSA member, however, you can receive your own monthly copy in the mail or online.



To give you a hint about how big a treasure the *PSA Journal* is, consider these highlights of the latest edition, March 2022.

Included in the issue is a list of members who have completed one of PSA's free online courses. The range of subjects is impressive: Image Critique and Evaluation, Introduction to Photoshop, Digital Photography Instruction, Portrait Photography, Still Life, Creating Images for PSA Competition, History of Photography, Advanced Photo Travel, and PSA Portfolio Creation.

There is also a very interesting article by *Paul Halphen* of North Carolina. In the Journal's *My Backyard* section, Paul highlights the beautiful waterfalls in his state. In his article, "Paradise of Falling Waters," he describes a number of waterfalls, their locations, and why he likes to photograph them. Waterfalls have been the subject of a number of *My Backyard* articles. How nice that the Journal tells you where to find the falls, and how to best photograph them.

In this issue, I learned that PSA conducts a Photobook contest. A photobook is a great way to share your images and save your memories. The article explains the complete process, a novel way display and share your talent.

The "Natural History of Burrowing Owls" piece, by *James Smith*, offers excellent advice to improve your nature observation and photography skills. Also, for the bird photographer there is an article by *Khai Nguyen*, "Nature Photography: Pelicans in the Chesapeake Bay," which explains the when, where, and how of photographing these magnificent birds.

This brief look barely touches the surface of the valuable information provided every month by the *PSA Journal*.

I urge you to consider becoming a PSA member. Go to: <https://psa-photo.org> for details. A year of digital membership, and monthly online Journal, is only \$45. To receive a printed Journal, the annual fee is \$65, a small price, really, for such a treasure.

## Welcome New Members

Please welcome these new PTCC members:

*Brian Spiegel*: Salinas

*Andrew Tronick*: Seaside

New members note: We're glad you chose to be part of PTCC. If you have any questions at all about how the Club operates, please don't hesitate to contact any member for answers. Use any "Contact Us" link from our website.



### Padre Trails Camera Club

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

All Officers and Activity Chairs can be reached via email at: [info@padretrailsccl.org](mailto:info@padretrailsccl.org)

Membership information can be found here:

[www.padretrailsccl.org/ptcc/ptccmembership.html](http://www.padretrailsccl.org/ptcc/ptccmembership.html)

2021 - 2022 Officers

President - *Ken Jones*

Vice President - *Charlie Gibson*

Secretary - *Dick Light*

Treasurer - *Judi Clayton*

Activity Chairs

Awards & Hospitality - *Chris Johnson*

Competitions - *John Drum* and *Bill Brown*

Judge Coordination - *Joni Zabala*

Greeter - *Nicole Asselborn*

Media Relations - *Bill Brown*

Membership - *Chris Johnson*

Newsletter - *Ken Jones* and *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

