

Bits & Pixels

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Human Hand in Nature Competition Winning Images — Group Green



1st "Until Next Tide" *Ken Jones*



2nd "Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk on Fence" *Clarissa Conn*

Human Hand in Nature photography is a category intended as a complement to the Nature category, substituting a requirement for evidence of human involvement and not the prohibition of it. If you are like most Club members, more than once you have captured an amazing nature photo, but you can't enter it in a Nature competition category because there's a human artifact in the photo, such as the fence with a hawk on it, or your friend's shoe with an orphaned meerkat climbing on it.

This competition is receptive of all of those stunning nature shots that have evidence of the human hand.

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Meet Becky Jaffe, Judge for Human Hand in Nature Competition

A photographer, naturalist, and educator living in Oakland, California, Becky Jaffe is active in the Bay Area photography community, teaching Art of Seeing courses for advanced fine art photographers, curating group exhibits in galleries and greenhouses, and judging competitions at the Berkeley Camera Club, the Contra Costa Camera Club, and the Alameda Photographic Society. She is the 2019 Artist-in-Residence at the University of California's Botanical Garden at Berkeley, where she has served as a docent for over a decade. She is fortunate to teach photography and art history internationally as a lecturer for Cal Discoveries Travel. In her dedicated photography practice, she uses in-camera techniques that stretch the photographic medium to create painterly effects, fusing an artist's sensibility with a biologist's curiosity in order to communicate reverence for the natural world.

Her photographs have been recognized by the California Academy of Sciences, the Center for Fine Art Photography, the Entomological Society of America, the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco, and have been published in *The Buddhist Poetry Review*, *Bay Nature Magazine*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *LensWork*. She is represented by the Abrams Claghorn Gallery in Albany, California. If you would like to purchase a print, inquire about speaking engagements, or find out about upcoming exhibits, classes, and workshops, visit <https://www.beckyjaffephotography.com>. Happy Seeing!



Human Hand in Nature Competition Winning Images

Group Green



3rd "Sand Dunes of Skeleton Coast, Namibia" *Janet Azevedo*



HM "Merlin Hawk" *Nicole Asselborn*



HM "Elf Owl" *Jerry Loomis*



HM "California Pastoral" *Denice Woyski*

Human Hand in Nature Competition Winning Images

Group Blue



1st "No Place to Land" *Julie Chen*



HM "Covid Glove" *Kent van Vuren*



2nd "Red-shouldered Hawks Mating on Utility Pole" *Dennis Giuffre*



HM "Western Gull Chicks" *Chris Johnson*



3rd "Black Phoebe Resting Unafraid on a Scarecrow" *Carol Silveira*



HM "Orphaned Meerkat" *Julie Chen*

Human Hand in Nature Competition Winning Images

Group Red



1st "Red-shouldered Hawk Takes a Bath" *Gerald R Gifford*



2nd "Sierran Tree Frog Finds Comfort in Resting on a Rose"
Gerald Gifford



HM "Tangled Buck Looking for Help" *Brooks Leffler*



3rd "Sea Lion Hammock" *Christina Parsons*



HM "On the Move" *Carol Gan*



HM "Osprey Eating Fish" *Fernando Ibanez*

Spots & Shots with Jerry Gifford

Sunrise Over Salinas Valley Strawberry Fields

Photos by Jerry Gifford, Text by Judi Clayton



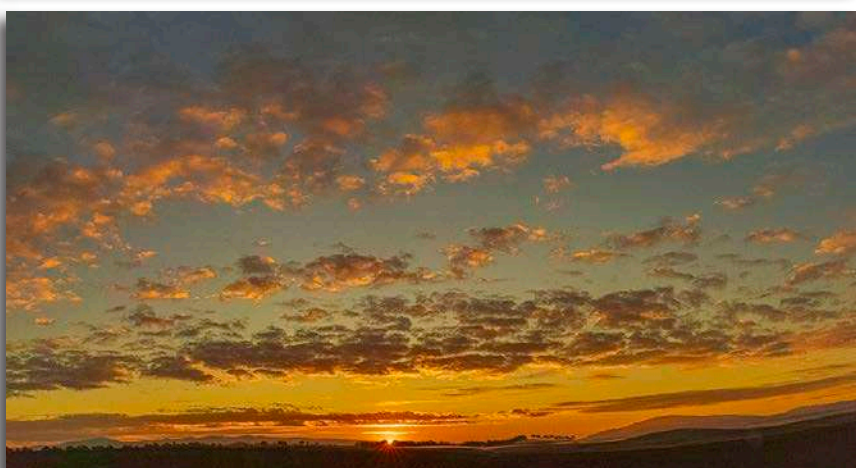
When long time PTCC member *Jerry Gifford* gets up in the morning, it is often very early so he can head out to his favorite spot to photograph a sunrise over the strawberry fields near Marina. He checks the weather forecast to make sure that no valley fog is predicted and peeks out the front window to see if the sky and clouds are visible to catch the sun's warm light. Jerry discovered this spot while he and his wife, Emiko, were making frequent day trips on Highway 1 and he noticed that at sunrise, and at sunset, the light from the sky would be reflected on the shiny plastic that covers the strawberry fields.

Usually about September and October (or in dry years even later) the strawberry farmers put plastic down over the rows where the strawberries are to be planted. What makes this spot especially nice is that in the early morning as the sun rises it is reflected on the plastic the farmers have just laid down on the strawberry rows. Jerry started shooting sunsets looking west from this spot but soon realized that there was a much better view when looking toward the much larger farmed area on the east side of the road and that provided a better foreground for a sunrise shot. He decided to go there early one morning, saw a beautiful sunrise, and decided to come back often.

To get to his spot, Jerry travels up Highway 1 from Monterey and exits onto Del Monte Boulevard in Marina at exit 409. His spot is along Del Monte Boulevard just past Lapis Road at GPS coordinates 36°42'51.9N 121°47'16.8"W. He shoots from the side of Del Monte Blvd. looking east across the strawberry field towards the mountains in the distance.

When the fields are rebuilt in September and October, the farmers start putting the plastic sheeting over the rows. The plastic remains until the fields are completely harvested in early fall. To take the greatest advantage of the shiny surface the plastic provides, it is best to try this shot early after the plastic is laid down following a rain so that dust, dirt, and the burgeoning strawberry plants do not disturb the reflective effect.

Jerry hand-holds his camera and waits for the moment that the sun hits the clouds from behind and underneath. Using a slow burst setting on his shutter he pans the horizon. He uses a wide-angle lens in the portrait orientation to get more height in his view of the fields and more proportional image. This allows lots of room for the strawberry rows at the bottom of the image and lots of room for the sky at the top. A small aperture will



help provide a star-burst effect as the sun just peaks over the hills.

Jerry is looking to see the sunrise accenting the trees along the hill's horizon with the warm colors shifting from orange to yellow. His image's horizons can cover a 270°+ area range depending on color and clouds in the surrounding sky.

While the three images shown on this page were created using the stitching method described, the lead image on the previous page was captured using a Canon EOS R5 with 24-70mm lens and fitted with an intervalometer, an attachment that automatically operates the shutter at a set interval. Careful review of the resulting individual images allows Jerry to select the one perfect capture of light, shadow, and color.

Jerry's images here truly define "working a subject," and we can all take away a lesson from that kind of dedication. While his equipment and techniques have evolved, and technology continues to provide more and better tools for photographers, Jerry's dedication to achieving the perfect capture remains constant.

Jerry converts these images to a panoramic image by stitching them together using Lightroom. Maybe we can convince Jerry to write an article in the future about how he does this.

My Two Bits

Zen and the Cross Country Road Trip

by Ken Jones

With our daughter and her family being firmly ensconced on the East Coast, and Anne and I likewise on the West Coast, and with me, by choice, only traveling on the ground, we've done the three-thousand-mile road trip at least forty times on many different roads since our daughter settled in Philadelphia in 2001. We're on what may be our last such trip as I write this.



In a car, you're moving slowly enough, and close enough to things to actually see the different worlds people live in from state to state. Overhearing conversations in restaurants, gas stations, and motels tunes you into the topics on people's minds. It also clues you into the changing dress "codes," political persuasions, and tattoo preferences along the way.

While I know these surface observations don't provide the full story of what life is like for people in the states we travel through — it's more of a core sample if you will — driving across the country provides an interesting slice of American life nonetheless.

So far, I've talked about what goes on outside the car in the towns we pass through and stay in. This has nothing to do with the Zen of the trip. That comes into play inside the car. Having driven from coast to coast as many times as we have, by necessity we've achieved a Zen state while traveling by car, aided by audiobooks, personal silence, and individual reflection on whether or not the navigation system in our car has any clue where we are or where we're going.

On this trip, after a cruise through Nova Scotia, down the St. Lawrence waterway, and spending time in the Finger Lakes region of upper New York State, we'll be returning west through Canada. It should give us a look at how Canadian life changes across the country. I hope our Zen state is allowed to cross the border with us.

Take your lens cap off...

Ken

Meeting Recap & Preview

May & June

On May 3rd the PTCC returned to Pebble Beach for an in-person education session with guest presenter Ted Grussing from Sedona, Arizona. Ted traveled to Northern California that day visiting his daughter in Half Moon Bay and on to Pebble Beach to meet with the Club. Ted is a former commercial airline pilot and glider pilot who is a self-taught photographer. After retiring, Ted purchased a single engine plane that resembles a glider so he could travel the canyons and terrain in the Sedona region. His knowledge and images of the geography was incredibly in depth noting the best times of day and opportunities for capturing amazingly sharp, detailed photographs. Ted publishes a blog that you can subscribe to at tedgrussingphotography.com.



The PTCC really stepped up their performance for this competition that included real time judging by Becky Jaffe whose biography is on page 2). Via Zoom with moderator *John Drum*, Becky provided excellent analysis and commentary lasting about one minute for each of the 60+ images presented.

While John and Becky met in a Zoom breakout room to make the group selections, the rest of the members were treated to a special visual production called "Selfies" that featured many Club members who shared their selfies for the five minute show. The selfies were high quality and entertaining to say the least, with a big thank you to *Chris Johnson* for producing the show, a good night all around.

Upcoming on June 7th Grayson Reed, a professional, freelance photographer, formerly a U.S. Army Ranger of the 75th Ranger Regiment, who specializes in people photography will talk about his approach to photography. He is the owner of Grayborders, a photography and videography company that focuses on imagery and video productions of portraits, concerts, products, and travel. Grayson believes that what separates a professional from an amateur in media production is preparation and experience. Anyone can show up and shoot unlimited photos, getting lucky with a few good ones. It's the professionals who have the experience to prepare ahead that take strategic photos and finish successfully with multiple great photos every time they shoot. More information will follow on this meeting.





What Makes a Creative Photograph?

by Carol Fuessenich



The topic for our upcoming June competition is Creative: Open. What does that mean? First, the Open means there is no assigned subject. A few months ago we had Creative but with the assigned subject of Fine Art. This time you can photograph anything you desire. A flower: check, a building: check, a dog: check, a still life: check, a car: check.

If you can take a picture of any of these subjects, then where does the Creative come in? Following is the PSA definition of Creative Altered Reality:

Creative Altered Reality images must demonstrate both creativity and altered reality. Creativity of an image is a dominant consideration in the competition, as exhibited by imaginative content and skill, originality of expression, unusual juxtapositions, and uniqueness of vision. The image should surprise the viewer. The image must exhibit alteration through digital post-processing of the original image. Such Altered Reality must be readily apparent to the viewer.

Images must originate as photographs (image capture of objects via light sensitivity) made by the entrant on photographic emulsion and digitally scanned; or directly acquired digitally. Images must be the entrants' own work and may not incorporate elements produced by anyone else. The judges' decision on whether the altered reality is "readily apparent" is final.

So, what does this mean for your entry? It means you cannot just take a picture of a pretty flower — that is reality, but not altered. If you take a flower and have a figure climbing the stem — you have altered it. You cannot take a picture of a car and submit it — that is reality, but not altered. If your car picture is altered to show the car driving up the stem of a flower you have altered reality. As you can tell, most alterations are done in post processing, but you can always alter reality of the subject to begin with. Take a toy helicopter with a string descending from it, tie the other end to a toy car, and suspend all in the air and take a picture of them in front of a photo of a congested freeway...a creative altered reality image.

Start thinking about your submission and allow enough time to play with possible ideas. Have fun!



Club Events Calendar

National Marine Sanctuaries Photo Contest

Enter through September 4th

Only photos taken while in compliance with wildlife viewing regulations and government approach regulations will be considered.

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/photo-contest.html>



Calendar of Superstar Pets Photo Contest

Show off your beloved pet in the 2024 SPCA Calendar.

The contest runs until July 31st.

<https://www.gogophotocontest.com/spcamc>



PTCC Board Meeting June 24th

Open to all Club Members.

Contact Ken for time and agenda.

kjones.pg@gmail.com



A Warm Welcome to Returning Club Member
Shelley Nemeth



The next PTCC Group Shoot is a
Scavenger Hunt at Fisherman's Wharf
Wednesday, August 9th to Sunday. August 19th



Upcoming Submission Dates

All competition submissions are due by midnight.

- Sunday, June 25th: Creative #2 - (Open)
- Sunday, July 30th: Nature #4 - (Directed - B&W - PSA compliant)
- Sunday, August 27th: Travel