

# The PSA Journal's History Series

## Celebrating 75 Years of PSA

Dedicated to the memory of longtime  
PSA Historian, Tony Patti, Hon PSA, FPSA



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### A Brief History of PSA Chapters and PSA Member Councils

Gerald Emmerich, FPSA, EPSA

Camera club councils have played an important role in the Photographic Society of America (PSA) from the very beginnings of the Society. Indeed, the Society grew out of the Associated Camera Clubs of America (ACCA), a council of camera clubs from across the United States founded in 1919. In 1933 the ACCA voted to change the name of the organization and to enroll individual members, as well as camera clubs. The "Photographic Society of America" began operating officially in 1934.

Individual chapters of the Society were organized under the Society's Constitution and Bylaws beginning in 1955. Each PSA Chapter should be viewed as a local branch of the Society, and each chapter is generally perceived as the voice of the Society for the area in which each chapter operates. This glance at the PSA history book looks at the chapters of the Society and the camera club councils which are PSA members.

**Chicago Chapter:** The original 1955 Chicago Chapter: granted Chapter Charter Number 1 from the Photographic Society of America.

Submitted by Richard Frieders, Hon. PSA, FPSA

#### PSA Chapters

Today, as in 1955, a PSA Chapter consists of individual Society members. Generally chapters meet about four times per year. Chapter meetings usually are day-long workshops or seminars, often with guest presenters. Chapters also may organize photography field trips or other outings for the chapter membership. Chapter membership varies, but usually ranges from 50 to 100 PSA members. However, over the last 50 years, some Chapters have numbered up to 500 members.

Since 1955, 40 chapters have received charters, and, over the years, the number of active chapters has varied. In 1968, there were only seven active chapters—*Chicago, Connecticut, Cosmopolitan, Hawaii, Pittsburgh, Tri-State, and Western Michigan*. In 1993, there were 18 active chapters. Today, there are 12

active chapters—*Cascade, Central Florida, Chicago, Everglades, Gem State, Gold Rush, Inland Empire, Mid-Atlantic, Rocky Mountain, Southern California Round Up, Wisconsin, and Yerba Buena*.

The Chicago Chapter received its charter in 1955 and is the oldest active PSA Chapter.

The individual PSA Chapters have operated with the assistance of the PSA Chapters Committee, which was established in 1953 with **W.E. Chase, APSA**, serving as the committee Chairman. The office of Chapters Vice President was created in 1987, with **George Bebout, APSA**, as Chapters VP. Two important activities are now annual events run under the guidance of the Chapters Committee—the PSA Chapters Showcase and the PSA Youth Showcase.

In the early 1980's, the Connecticut Chapter, under the leadership of Chapter Chairman **Edward J. Lemire, Jr.**, promoted a showcase of the photography of the Society's active chapters. The first PSA Chapters Showcase was presented at the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary annual conference in San Francisco in 1983. This first showcase was organized as a prejudged, inter-chapter pictorial slide presentation with taped music and commentary; and the showcase was duplicated for use by PSA chapters, camera clubs and councils. The initial showing of the 27<sup>th</sup> annual PSA Chapters Showcase will be presented at the PSA 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in West Yellowstone, Montana in September, 2009.

As Society membership decreased in the 1980's and 1990's, the Chapters Committee, under the leadership of Chapters Vice President **Jack Worthen, FPSA**, sought to encourage a new generation of photographers to join the Society. In 1998 the first Outstanding Photographs from Young Photographers exhibition was selected and shown at the PSA International Conference of Photography in Orlando in September, 1998. The exhibit included 55 prints selected from 200 entries from 35 high schools in six states sponsored by eight PSA



chapters, camera clubs, and councils. The 2009 exhibition, now named the PSA Youth Showcase, will also be shown at the 2009 conference. It is anticipated that the 2009 Youth Showcase will be selected from more than 400 entries from nearly 100 high schools in about 15 states.

### PSA Member Camera Club Councils

A camera club council is a number of camera clubs—usually located in the same state, metropolitan area, or geographic area—which join together to participate in photographic activities as a group. A camera club council may also be known as an association, federation, or organization of camera clubs. Activities of a camera club council usually include photo contests for member clubs and individuals in member clubs; organizing weekend workshops, outings, and conferences; and providing seminars featuring guest presenters.

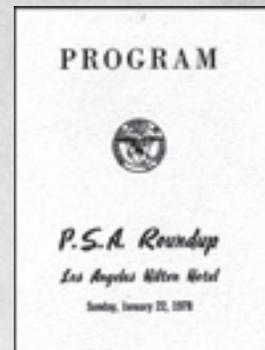
Camera club councils have a long history of membership in the Photographic Society of America. Today, there are 21 camera club councils which are members of the Society, including 18 councils which have been members of the Society for more than 25 years. Nine councils have been Society members for more than 50 years – *Chicago Area Camera Clubs Association, Gulf States Camera Club Council, New England Camera Club Council, North Central Camera Club Council, Northern California Council of Camera Clubs, Northwest Council of Camera Clubs, Southern California Council of Camera Clubs, Southwestern Michigan Council of Camera Clubs, and Twin Cities Area Council of Camera Clubs*. The Chicago Area Camera Clubs Association (CACCA) has been a PSA member for 67 years. Two of the 21 councils are located in Great Britain in PSA Region 29, while the remaining 19 councils are located in the United States.

The Southern California Council of Camera Clubs (S4C), formed in 1941, has been a member of the Photographic Society of America since 1953. For over 65 years, the Council has served the photographers in southern California in many ways. The activities of S4C provide a good example of the activities of a typical camera club council. Each year the Council sponsors outings; photographic trips; workshops and programs; and competitions, including pictorial, nature, photo travel, and photojournalism competitions, as well as interclub competitions for member camera clubs. Thirteen camera clubs make up the present membership of S4C.

Over long periods, many PSA member councils have performed great service to the community

of photographers in the promotion of the art and science of photography. The Southwestern Michigan Council of Camera Clubs (SWMCCC) has 19 member clubs and, for 35 years, has sponsored the SWMCCC Summer School of Photography each year in July. The New England Camera Club Council (NECCC) has about 80 member clubs and, for 64 years, has sponsored the NECCC Photography Conference each year, also in July.

In 2000, the responsibilities of the Chapters Vice President were widened to include representation for camera clubs and camera club councils. In 2005, the Camera Clubs and Councils Committee initiated a showcase of the photography of the PSA member councils. The “PSA Councils Challenge” showcases images in three pictorial sections: prints, film slides, and projected digital images. The first showing of the fifth annual PSA Councils Challenge will take place at the PSA 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in West Yellowstone, Montana in September, 2009. ■



**Roundup Chapter:** *The 1978 Program from the P.S.A. Roundup Chapter in California. Submitted by Marilyn Grace*

## Historical Vignette: *News Highlights*

“The Four Print Exhibition Plan” is suggested to encourage print makers to voluntarily limit their entries to four prints per salon and each participant should enter at least 10 salons per year.”

This plan was the forerunner of the Pictorial Division’s Award of Merit program, which later developed into the **Star Rating System and the Who’s Who listing.**

*PSA Journal 1936*

**The PSA Journal** published more than 200 pages and marked the milestone publication of its first color photographs.

*PSA Journal, November 1944*

**PSA Goes On-Line:** Chairman, *PSA Special Committee on CompuServe’s PhotoForum*, Robert Gorrill, announced that “Your Photographic Society of America is now part of the ‘Information SuperHighway’ and is available to you on-line with the CompuServe Information Service.”

*PSA Journal, January 1995*

President James Turnbull, FPSA laments that camera clubs “don’t care” about PSA and urges incoming President Pauline Sweezy, FPSA, to pursue the establishment of a “Camera Club Vice President.” President Turnbull writes, “There is no national officer directly and specifically responsible for the care and feeding of our member camera clubs. This is ridiculous considering the camera clubs stand as our *only* membership market.”

*PSA Journal 1995*

*Elena McTighe • Publications Vice President*