



Chimpanzees 6405

Distinctive Image

featuring...

Nan Carder, APSA, MPSA2, AFIAP
Lancaster, California

By **Larry Cowles,**
FPSA, GMPSA/P
EFIAP/g

Photos © Nan Carder,
APSA, MPSA2, AFIAP

This month's distinguished photographer is not only an excellent photographer but an outstanding volunteer to PSA. **Nan Carder, APSA, MPSA2, AFIAP** lives in Lancaster, California and has been involved in her local camera club, council and chapter as well as in PSA. Nan's interest in photography started when she was a child. Her father loved to take pictures with his Kodak 35 mm camera and shared his interest with Nan and her sister Lynn. When she was a teenager, she was given a 35mm camera and found enjoyment in taking pictures for fun. It wasn't until 2005 when she purchased a Canon 20D DSLR that she became serious about her photography.

Nan thought about entering the local Antelope

Valley Fair photography contest, but did not have the courage to do so. Because she had the new digital camera, she made a deal with herself that if she entered the fair photo contest and received a prize, she would join the local photography club (the Lancaster Photography Association—LPA), which she had wanted to do for years. When one of her images received an Honorable Mention, she decided this would be a good time for her to join the club and learn how to use and understand the camera. So, she joined LPA in 2006.

Her club had a hands-on 'Still Life in the Dark' workshop which she decided to attend. It was a disaster. Every still-life image she took that evening looked like she was panning, and

she immediately exited the workshop. She then took some beginner's lessons from one of her club members, Tylene Trout, who taught her basic photographic skills. She continued to enter local competitions to improve her photography skills.

Her club belonged to the Southern California Council of Camera Clubs (S4C) and she started entering the Council's competitions with success; later she became an S4C Council board member, and she has remained in this position from 2010-2019. She has received many council high-point and individual awards. She took on the responsibility of entering her club's images into the S4C Interclub competitions in 2008 and continues to do so.

She met **Joanne Stolte, HonPSA, MPSA, EFIAP**, at a Chapter event and was immediately introduced to PSA. Joanne suggested she become a member. Six months later in 2008 she joined PSA. When Nan retired as a hospital nurse, Joanne immediately found her a PSA job, which Joanne has done many times since. Nan became a PSA club representative and worked to get her club involved in PSA in 2010. In 2011, Nan was the PSA Large Club Rep of the Year. Since becoming a PSA member, over 30 members from her club have become PSA members. Nan started entering her club into PSA Interclub competitions from 2009 and continued to do so through 2018. LPA and its members have received many awards and year-end high points. LPA also has received the PSA Service Award twice (2011 and 2013), and received first place in the PSA Website Contest and Newsletter Contest. Nan promoted the PSA Youth Showcase from 2010 through 2017, and students from her area have received many awards including Best of Shows in both digital and prints.

In 2010, Nan entered her first PSA-recognized International Exhibition on the advice of **Susan Cowles, APSA, GMPSA, AFIAP** and received multiple acceptances. Since then, she has earned her Proficiency (PPSA) distinction in 2011, her Excellence (EPSA) in 2013, her Masters (MPSA) in 2015, and her MPSA2 in 2019. She earned her Artiste Federation de L'Art Photographique (FIAP) distinction in 2019.

Nan enjoys taking pictures and is well-rounded, competing in every division except 3D. She has Galaxies in the Projected Image Division Color (5), Nature (3), and Photojournalism (2), and has Star 5 in Monochrome PID, Star 5 in Travel, and Star 4 in the Pictorial Print Division Color, and Star 3 in Small Print Monochrome. She has earned PSA Gold medals in each of these divisions.

In 2013, when the Color Projected Image Division merged with the Electronic Image Division Star Track, a new Monochrome Star Path was created. Projected Image Division Monochrome (PID-M) has become Nan's favorite



Pelican 0222



EMP 7834



Yosemite 5518



LA County Air Show 0679

area. Since she also competes in the division, it is only natural that she would convert many of those images into monochrome images.

Nan says, “It’s been an honor to be selected and featured as one of PSA’s Distinctive Image photographers.” Nan wants to thank **Stuart Lynn, APSA, QPSA, and Joanne Stolte, HonPSA, MPSA, EFIAP**, for their support during her involvement in photography. She continues, “They have always been very supportive not only in my progression in photography, but they have also given me many opportunities to judge at both the council and International Exhibitions levels. I would also would like to thank **Elena McTighe, FPSA, MPSA**, who has been a wonderful PSA mentor.”

Nan has been very involved in PSA, serving on the Board of Directors since 2011. She was the Chapters, Clubs, and Councils Vice President from 2011-2016. She has served as the PSA Secretary for the PSA Board of Directors and Executive Committee from 2016 to the present.

Photographic Alliance of America Executive Committee Secretary from 2018-2019. Writing for the *PSA Journal* has earned her a second Silver Star 2017.

Her success in exhibitions has earned her a listing in PSA’s Who’s Who since 2010, being in the top boxes many times, including the Who’s Who Top Exhibitor in Small Color Prints in 2016, 2017, and 2018 and listed in the Top Box for Small Monochrome Prints in 2016, 2017, 2018.

Nan has received the ‘PSA Image of the Year’ in Small Monochrome Prints and Photo Travel Divisions, and was the Small Color Prints top exhibitor in 2016. Nan has judged PSA International Exhibitions in the Projected Image Division in Color and Monochrome, Nature, Photojournalism, and Small Prints.

Some Major Awards:

- PSSNY International Exhibition Best Author, 2015
- PSA Pictorial Print Small Print Image of the Year 2015
- PSA Photo Travel Division Image of the Year 2016
- PSA Gold Medal German Mega Circuit; FIAP Gold Medal German Mega Circuit, 2016
- RSW German Railroad Photo Clubs Magazine—one of Nan’s image was featured. 2016
- Received Senior Associate Wilmington International Exhibition of Photography, 2017
- Silver Medal Image and on the PSSNY International Exhibition Catalog Cover 2016
- FIAP Blue Badge Malmo Exhibition—High Point, Top Exhibitor, Sweden, 2018

Nan says that one of the highlights was being selected to have images shown in the PSA special print exhibitions that have been held in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Naiman, Inner Mongolia.



Giraffe 9948 mono

Technique

I photograph mainly with a 5D Mark III. I also have used a 1D Mark IV in the past. My favorite lens has been the Canon® 28-300mm f3.5-5.6 lens, thanks to **Henry Ng's, APSA, EPSA's** advice. It is a very versatile lens, with good range. I also use a Canon 24-105mm f4, a Macro 100mm f2.8, and a 300mm f2.8 (which has been used for many of my wildlife images).

My workflow is fairly simple. Keep it simple, sweet and eliminate distracting elements. The most important thing to remember about photography is that it is all about the light, being at the right place at the right time, and hoping that you have the right equipment that you need to get a good image

I process my images with Photoshop® and I shoot in RAW. I use some of the basic sliders such as exposure, highlights, clarity, and shadows; and now that RAW has the texture slider, that sometimes is incorporated into the workflow. I then continue to process my images in Photoshop. I have been using some of the NIK® Software, like Silver Efex Pro, which now has been taken over by DxO.com.

If there is a question as to whether an image is a true monochrome, I will then take the image back into Photoshop and apply the black and white filter over the image to ensure the image is a true monochrome.

Most of my images have a central theme, and images generally are simple with lighting directing the viewer's eyes. As with all images, the image should create impact. The photographer still needs to focus on good composition. The subject should be noted immediately, and the subject should be sharp. For monochrome images, there should be good contrast between light and dark with true whites and blacks and varying tones.

It is important to look for images that have good contrast with pure white and near black, shape and texture. You can almost visualize what will make a good monochrome image. Texture can be seen frequently with animals and birds. Patterns can be important in monochrome images.



Flamingo 1388



Great Blue Heron 2982

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Egret 2233



Jack 6986



Dandelion 0359

Artist's Statement



My philosophy is that in photography “something will usually present itself”; you should always look around you, because the best image may be beside or behind you. I enjoy taking images of everything and anything. If a photographer is limited to what type of images they can take at the time, there are few subject choices to make if the conditions are not right.

Since I enter exhibitions in every Division's Star Path (except the 3D Division), the images I have selected for this article reflect subject diversity. Many of my images are from the nature, photojournalism, and travel areas.

If you think an image is a good image, and it was entered in a competition and has not done well, take the time to study the image to try to figure out what can be improved. The image may be overall too dark or too light; may have hot spots; may have no detail in the dark areas; or may even not tell the right story. Sometimes the issue is the judge's opinion, so re-enter the image a few more times. If you compete in exhibitions in different countries, find the countries that like your image style and keep entering your images in those exhibitions.

Competing in different photographic areas has made me a stronger photographer. It has challenged me to improve my skills and make good choices with my image selection. I always encourage new photographers to spend time looking at winning images, wherever they compete. This will give the photographer new ideas, and stretch their imagination.