

Focus

Fox Valley Camera Club & the PSA Youth Showcase

PSA Camera Clubs and Community Service

This month the *Journal's* occasional article entitled *Focus*, that features a member or member-club, turns to the *Fox Valley Camera Club* of Wisconsin.

Hazel Meredith

The younger members of any group or organization are its future. And it is no different with the Photographic Society of America (PSA). The annual PSA Youth Showcase, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary, is a means to encourage high school students to pursue their passion for photography. One of the camera clubs instrumental to the formation and continuing success of this program is the *Fox Valley Camera Club (FVCC)* of Wisconsin.

FVCC had its beginnings as the Appleton Camera Club in the early 1950's. The club figured prominently in promoting photography throughout Wisconsin and actively participated in a number of community events including the Northwestern Wisconsin Council of Camera Clubs involving clubs in eight Fox Valley area cities. FVCC is celebrating 35 years as a member of PSA, having joined the Society in 1973, and 58 years as a camera club.

Selecting as a goal to promote photography in the community, especially among area youth, FVCC developed a youth photography program working with area senior high schools.

Upon successfully presenting the program to photography instructors in a number of area schools, the first valley-wide contest was conducted in May 1997.

Not all schools are created equal when it comes to photography facilities. Schools with established photography curriculum have sophisticated darkrooms and generous weekend camera loan-out policies. Other schools are not that well provided. Yet the instruction, assistance, and encouragement provided by the program, has resulted in photographs of exceptional quality and impressive artistic endeavors. As one judge commented, "We don't give these teachers enough credit for all they accomplish." The results of the Youth Showcase certainly bear witness to the outstanding job they are doing. Schools look forward to this program and arrange their teaching schedules for club members to meet with the students, which is done for both the first and second semester photography classes. The students are shown examples of winning photos from previous contests making the program instructive as well as informative. The FVCC high school youth photography program was selected as the working format for the present PSA Youth Photography Showcase.

The success of the inner city youth programs in Denver, then in Milwaukee, provided enough interest to consider a nationwide program. The PSA Board of Directors accepted the program and it was officially announced at the St. Charles, Illinois, 59th PSA International Conference of Photography in September, 1997.

Funding in the form of a PSA member-memorial for an eight-year period provided award money for the winner's top medal and accompanying cash awards. The primary goal of the activity is that it be administered in each community by area PSA member groups – chapters, camera clubs, or councils. This interchange between the club members and area students is critical. Without this direct contact, the program becomes ineffective and in the final analysis, amounts to not much more than just another photography contest for students.



Mary Heiting
PSA Representative



*Duaine Besaw,
Betty Winter and
Lenore Ryan making the
final selections in judging
the 2007 National PSA
Youth Photography
Exhibition. Photo © Jack
Worthen, FPSA*



Mark Burns & Hugh Myers reviewing photos at a FVCC meeting. Photo © Jack Worthen, FPSA

Nationally, one best photograph is chosen for the top award in each of five categories – architecture; human interest; landscapes/water-scapes; photojournalism; and photographer’s choice—and one photograph is chosen as the best of all entries received. The photos are published in the *PSA Journal*, exhibited at the PSA Annual Conference and on the PSA Web Site, and a one-year PSA Youth Membership is also awarded. Additional selected prints from all entries make up a 75 print exhibition shown at the Society’s annual conference. Each year a select group from this exhibition is displayed in the PSA Oklahoma City Headquarters lobby from October through December.

FVCC sponsors five area high schools: at the end of the second semester, student photographs from the first and second semester classes are collected from each participating high school and one best in each of the four categories and two from photographer’s choice are selected to represent each school in the national judging. Fifty high schools throughout the country participate in this Photographic Society of America activity.

In addition to promoting the Youth Showcase, for the past few years FVCC has devoted additional efforts to the program by providing judges for the national competition. The club also prepares a CD of each annual exhibition for national distribution to participating clubs for presentation to the schools they work with.

Club members show their work at the club, local, national and international levels. In addition to PSA membership, FVCC is also affiliated with the Wisconsin Area Camera Club Organization (WACCO) and continues to have a good representation of members who are individual PSA members.

FVCC programs consist of presentations by knowledgeable people in a variety of professional and non-professional photographic specialties. Programs are intended to interest people of varied skill levels. FVCC holds competitions throughout the year in projected digital images and prints, covering many topics. The club presents a Spring Exhibition in conjunction with an annual banquet to present and review members’ work. ■

**For information on the
PSA Youth Showcase,
contact Director Kathy Braun, APSA
at Pkzbraun@aol.com**

M. Jack Worthen, FPSA, Dedicated to Youth Showcase



Although he is quick to give credit—and rightly so—to the many club members that it takes to coordinate and execute the youth program each year, **Jack Worthen, FPSA**, played an instrumental part in the promotion of the Youth Showcase.

This PSAer retired from a career in advertising, illustrative and commercial photography and color photolithography. He was selected as PSA’s Area Representative for the year of 1992-93. His interest in PSA Chapters resulted in organizing and

chartering the Wisconsin Chapter in 1992, when he served as its first chairman. Mr. Worthen was elected an Associate (APSA) in 1994 and a Fellow in 2000. He was the Chapters, Clubs and Councils Vice President during the formative years of the Youth Showcase and he is still instrumental in its year-to-year operation.

Gerald Emmerich, FPSA, EPSA, states, “In the 1990’s, Jack realized PSA was getting ‘older’ and he tried to develop a program to contact younger people. He thought it better to approach high school students rather than college students as college-aged students are busier and don’t always have time to get involved in an organization such as a camera club. His long term efforts produced results and have helped PSA members to become involved with their communities and perform community service.”

Kathy Braun, APSA, Youth Showcase Director, says, “Jack was the guiding light of the formation of the Youth Showcase. His dedication is unparalleled.”