

PSA News

AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 2024



Welcome

Our new member in January was:

Diane Perry, Tea Gardens, NSW

Congratulations

Nilmini De Silva has been awarded EPSA.

Thank You

This month we have contributions from Jen Fawkes, Helen Walker and Diane Schofield.

PSA Journal

The February issue of the PSA Journal is available now and the PDF can be downloaded from the PSA website.

Please Check

Please log on to the PSA website, click on “Profile Home” link and check that all the information in your profile is correct.

Click on “Membership Info” to check when your membership will be due.

There is also a button to “Refer a Friend” - this allows you to send a link to someone who wants to join PSA and you will be credited with the referral.

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PHOTOJOURNALISM and the art of storytelling

Jen Fawkes, APSA, EPSA, SPSA

As a photojournalist, documentary and street photographer, the idea of story-telling is close to my heart. There is nothing that pleases me more than to wander the streets looking for interesting events or people, quirky situations, and responding to ‘disturbances’, be they laughter, music or something else.

As an international judge, I see much confusion about what constitutes a ‘photojournalism’ image that might be suitable for competition. Photojournalism competitions are over-run with sporting images, or perhaps images that might be considered press photography, such as accidents or fires, and I see a lot of images of fairs and festivals. All of these are very valid images for a photojournalism competition, but in reality, these subgroups constitute only a small part of what is really photojournalism – the photographic art of storytelling.

Photojournalism is about being able to tell a visual story in an image or a series of images. The Photojournalism Division of PSA runs competitions both for individual images (PJ Quarterlies) or for a collection of images (PJ Photo Story). For the latter, a title or some dialogue is also allowed. However, in international competition, the entry must be only one image, and since judges do not see the titles, the story in the image has to capture the eye and attention of the judge.



Les Madres de Plaza de Mayo (the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo) who meet and march every week, still seeking information about their children who ‘disappeared’ during the 1976-1983 coup.

In the past, sporting images dominated photojournalism competition, and so the PJ Division added a special themed section ‘Human Interest’. Human Interest states, *When Human Interest is specified, those images depict a person or persons in an interactive, emotional or unusual situation, excluding sports action.*

It is important to note here is that Human Interest images are **very** suitable for entry into the General Photojournalism competition. However, if you do enter the images into a specific Human Interest themed section, you should not enter images that depict sports action.

I believe that the concept of Human Interest really becomes the essence of storytelling. Try not to equate Photojournalism with Press Photography. Images worthy worthy of printing in a press story are not necessarily suitable as Photojournalism entries. Storytelling can be about any facet of human life.

- Think about a small child eating an ice-cream, and the ice-cream topples out of the cone. If you can capture the look of despair on the child's face while capturing the ice-cream down the child's shirt, you have told a lovely story.
- Think about an image of a grandfather and grandchild playing chess in the park. How might you capture this image and still tell the story about the relationship between the two as well as showing the game?
- You spot some people dressed in costumes on the way to a Comic-Con event – there is a story there.



Selling popcorn in La Boca, Argentina

So, how can we ensure that our images tell a strong story? One simple way is to look at the Human Interest definition and ask yourself – does the story show interaction between people (the grandfather/ grandchild playing chess)? Is it emotional (the child losing the ice cream), or is it unusual (people dressed up in Comic-Con costumes walking in the street)? An image of people walking along the street takes on a whole new meaning (and adds a lot more interest) when they are dressed in costume.

Think about your images that might make a viewer laugh, cry, be shocked or be surprised. Think about those images that make a viewer want to look closer. These are the images that are inviting the viewer to think about the story in your image.



Some random street dancing in El Chalten, Argentina

Storytelling images are all around us. I am currently travelling in Argentina, and random things happen all the time – spontaneous dancing in the street, musicians playing in a local park, children chasing balloons, street vendors spruiking for customers... So be observant, be present and listen.



Under an archway in Bariloche, Argentina, 3 musicians entertain the crowd.

There is a common misunderstanding that you are not allowed to edit photojournalism images, and it is important that you understand what you can and cannot do to a PJ image in post-production. This information can be found here:

<https://psa-photo.org/page/division-definitions>

At the end of the day, you may not be able to control the weather or the conditions around you (such as background distractions), but there is no excuse for a poorly exposed image or a blurred subject – we have remarkable technology in our camera. Learn how to use it to capture remarkable stories that happen all around us.

Decluttering

Helen Walker, MPSA2

I take photos ...I love the photos and promise them I will get back to them soon but sometimes (read too often!) I just don't get back. These images just sit in my catalogue. Some images I keep because I just don't know how to process them yet. Some because of the memory of the day and the people I was with. Many because I press on multiple takes, and I just cannot pick out the best, so I keep all. If you dump your photos without serious evaluation, you are building a confused mess that grows out of control. Storage is now relatively cheap but if you want a clear vision for your photographic life that will improve your photographic outcomes and save you time, a lean efficient database of images is a must.

The Benefits of Decluttering:

1. Your catalogue is more functional and filled with only the photos that have potential.
2. Forgotten treasures are found and processed.
3. Old favourites are reprocessed and now looking better than ever.
4. You get better at evaluating your images.... your critical eye gets a polish.
5. You appreciate just how much better you process images now compared to then.
6. Your catalogue runs quicker, you know what you have in the database and time is saved.

My Method

1. Open Lightroom catalogue in library module.
2. Choose a folder I know is confused and overburdened.
3. Write down the last 4 digits of each file in the folder.
4. Go to all photographs folder, hit "Library- Find" and put in the first of the 4-digit segments. All the photos in the catalogue which end with those 4 numbers will appear. For me this means the original, any copies and if the image has been accepted in competition or if the image is retired from any competition division plus other random images ending in that number sequence.
5. Look at each image and consider: Do I still like the image, can I improve the processing, is the image of competition standard and finally will I use it in competition. It goes along the lines keep, recycle, and kill. Get rid of those files you will never use.
6. When I have decided the fate of the images I cross it off the list of 4 digits and move to the next...repeat....repeat.
7. When I have completed the folder colour code it, choose another folder...repeat the steps above.

My method is not the best one, but it works for me. Experiment yourself. The main idea is the thought process. You are aiming for a healthy well organised catalogue where you know what you have, and you can use it efficiently.

This is a long-term project, but the journey is a pleasure.... you do remember taking those special images. It takes patience but you do little by little. I started just before Christmas 23 and already have received benefits. I have found many new competition images that I did not know I had. I have cleaned out the dead weight in the catalogue by over 10% and I am still working through colour. The best thing about the process was salvaging forgotten images. The ideal is to declutter regularly but for now I am happy with a start.

Be ruthless...keep only the best.

An example of what was lost now found...



Sacred Fields Czech Republic: Travel Image, Taken 2011, Processed 2023.

Photography and Travel – Lessons Learned

Diane Schofield

When I retired, Colin (my husband) and I started to travel and this has provided a wide range of experiences, both photographic and otherwise.

We did a lot of Australian coach trips into all states and were blown away by the magnificent country and the people whom we met. We also did Ken Duncan workshops at the Whitsundays, Central Australia, and Central Coast. It was at the Whitsundays, where my first Canon digital camera slipped through the fingers of a helper and it landed in the drink at Whitehaven. I was given an upgrade through insurance.

Lesson for everyone: Things can be replaced. In the end, they are only irritants in the scheme of things.

Overseas travel was educational and amazing. Our first trips were to America (California, New Hampshire, Hawaii, Alaska), and finally to Canada. Singapore was a special place for us and in Dubai, we ended up in a “Black Maria”. The police were determined that we should not be walking in 40 degree heat to a taxi rank. We were locked in the back seat and taken to our hotel!

We travelled around New Zealand then cruised the U.K., Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the Baltics, The Black Sea, South America, Falklands and Antarctica. This was followed with the Budapest to Amsterdam River Cruise, which ended with an add-on trip from Amsterdam through Belgium to Paris. In Paris, we were very much shocked by the terrorists’ attacks on a concert, restaurant and another two locations. Some of the terrorists had run past our hotel. The next morning, all events were called off and we were left with a caution about wandering out. Police dressed in flack and carrying heavy weaponry were everywhere. Streets of media vans were all set up. Of course, I went out there and mingled with locals at the memorials. It was a heart wrenching experience.

Our final trip was through Portugal and Spain. Pick-pocket capitals of Europe. However, it was a fabulous trip, but they couldn’t convince me that paella was the “bees knees”. Colin on the other hand will enjoy eating anything from garlic French Snails, crocodile, buffalo, eel, etc, to our National Emblem (Kangaroo and Emu). I truly gag at it all.

The photographic lessons I have learned from travel can be summarised as follows:

- Be prepared for the unplanned disasters and chaos which may happen. Make the most of the moment and roll with the flow. If you don't, you will ruin that well-earned holiday for you and others. I cannot think of one holiday of ours, when a disaster has not hit us. Black humour is a terrible part of my character, which rises up and laughter takes over at very awkward moments. It certainly has got us through a lot of disasters over the years.
- Plan your trip and photographic gear and backups. Check that you have got all of your cables, suitable power plugs and a small extension cord on a power board.
- Cleaning kit, spare lens covers and cleaning cloths are a must.
- Add the free shower caps to your kit – handy for inclement weather.
- Are your bags pick-pocket / knife resistant?
- Always carry plenty of batteries and flash cards on excursions.
- Always have the batteries charged and ready.
- Download and back-up your images every night.
- Religiously reformat your cards after downloading and checking the files.



Academy of Music, Paris

- If moving from cool to warm areas, or warm to cold areas, watch out for lens fog and regularly clean and dry your camera.
- In cold areas, carry your spare batteries close to your body to keep them warm.
- Watch your camera gear and bags whilst overseas. Pick-pockets are well organised and plentiful. Keep your wits about you.
- Be patient with fellow travellers who think you have good gear and therefore can fix any problem for every camera onboard ship.
- If approached by one of these people, quickly refer them to your partner as the techno geek. I did this to Colin and it took him a few hours to look at the camera, only to be told after intense interrogation, that the camera was her nephew's and that she had dropped it in the water!
- Don't forget to press the shutter button. It is better to be overloaded with images than to have just a meagre coverage. In this digital age, we have the luxury of capturing and deleting without cost.
- Successful images CAN be taken from coach windows. Use a fast speed. Keep your camera pressed onto the glass (preferably with hood attached to stop reflections) and focus on the distance. Blurred foreground may be cropped out in end processing.
- When you get home, look closely at your images, you may find treasures within them that your eye did not see at the time e.g. the grasshopper in the open beak of a Cattle Egret chick. I certainly did not see it at the time in the field.



*House of Terror museum,
Budapest, Hungary.*

Some Upcoming Exhibitions

March 11, 2024 - **SOUTHERN CROSS** (2024-1082) 1 Judging, 2 Sections: 3DD: Open, Scapes; <https://www.oz3d.info/Southern%20Cross/southerncross.html>

May 11, 2024 - **OUTBACK** (2024-1074) 1 Judging, 5 Sections: PID Color: Open, People Portraits, Landscapes; PID Mono: Open; PJD: Photojournalism Digital; <https://outbackinternational.myphotoclub.com.au/>

June 1, 2024 - **TERRA AUSTRALIS** (2024-1085) 1 Judging, 6 Sections: PID Color: Open, People Portraits, From above, Seascapes; PID Mono: Open; PJD: Photojournalism Digital. <https://terraaustralis.myphotoclub.com.au/>

June 10, 2024 - **VIGEX PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINT** (2024-1147) 1 Judging, 6 sections: ND: Nature Print; PPD: Large Color Open, Large Color Creative, Large Color Scapes, Large Mono Open, Large Mono Portrait, Nature Print; <https://www.vigex.org.au>

The only exhibitions that I list here are the Australian exhibitions that have PSA recognition. A full list of upcoming PSA recognised exhibitions is available here <https://psa-photo.org/page/exh-lists>.

**Thanks to everyone who contributed to this month's newsletter.
Please send me some news or views for my next newsletter!**

If you need help with any PSA matters please contact me.

Regards,
Roy

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