

The PSA Journal's History Series

Celebrating 75 Years of PSA

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



Joanne Stolte,
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Looking to the Future...

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Over the last eleven months every issue of the *PSA Journal* has celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) by reviewing some aspect of the Society's history. This look to the Society's future will attempt to put those articles in perspective and help us to learn from history.

Every article touched on the changing sociological and technological influences on photography and the Society over the last 75 years. PSA's ability to respond to those influences by providing services and activities (benefits of membership) that met the needs of the members and potential members was the story of successes and some bumps in the road.

As we look to the future, it is evident that the Society has learned from the past and is at a very exciting time of rapid change and growth. The 2005-2009 Total Membership graph shows that PSA is responding to today's changing technology and culture by providing services that are desired and required by today's photo enthusiast.



How is PSA responding to the needs of today's new members and potential members? What insight does this provide to the Society's future?

As described in the history series, exhibitions have been an important part of PSA and their evolution over the last 75 years has been significant.

- Today there are several PSA-member clubs that want to conduct a PSA-recognized International Exhibition. PSA is developing a web-based **Exhibition Training Program for member clubs** that will include extensive consultation services during the planning and execution of the club's first exhibition. This program will be available in early 2010. *Imagine the potential increase in new exhibitions!*
- Today's exhibitors track their acceptances using spreadsheets, but expect the exhibitions and Star Ratings Directors to have all their acceptances and titles readily available in a database. To meet this demand PSA is developing the **PSA-recognized Exhibition Acceptance Database**. Beginning in January 2010, exhibitions receiving PSA-recognition will submit the exhibition's acceptances to the PSA database. *Imagine the time when PSA Star Ratings Directors will be able to automatically inform a member that they have earned a PSA Star Rating!* This possibility isn't that difficult to consider since it already exists with the **PSA Membership Star Program**. *Now imagine the future and those exhibitors around the world who have never tracked their PSA exhibition acceptances and they discover that, if they join PSA, they will have access*

to their record of PSA acceptances and, if earned, their first divisional stars will be automatically awarded!

- With the digital technology employed, fewer and fewer photo enthusiasts who might learn from the experience are observing the judgments of today's exhibitions. However, the judging of the first round of the Image Colleague Society **ICS Circuit** in October 2009 **was televised** and seen all over the world. *Imagine a PSA-recognized Exhibition Website that would carry live exhibition judgments that could also be recorded and viewed anytime!*

Clubs have been an integral part of the fabric of PSA. The Charter Clubs were described and the history of member Councils of Camera Clubs was reviewed in the history series.

- Some of today's clubs are virtual clubs and most of today's clubs conduct the club's activities online via the club's Web site and emailed newsletter. To meet the needs of today's member clubs, the **PSA Club Services Web site** has been developed and all member clubs receive a quarterly newsletter "the Projector" via email. There is **customizable template club Web site** and **club image management software** available at a discount for member clubs. The six **PSA digital Interclub Competitions are now free**. **PSA club group liability insurance** is available and clubs renewing their membership receive a **free Adobe® DVD** featuring Julieanne Kost. The Region Directors have a Power Point program "PSA Club Services" that they can present to prospective clubs and use as a review of club benefits with member clubs. *Imagine how many clubs will join PSA because of these member services!*

The sharing of photography knowledge for mutual growth and enjoyment has been a keystone of PSA. This was touched on in the history article about the Divisions. The article regarding Honors and Distinctions asked "Does recognition of those who contribute in turn lead to the encouragement of others to also contribute?"

- Today's photo enthusiast wants to learn now, whenever they have time and where ever they happen to be. The **PSA New Member Web**

site with its related Image Evaluation, Mentor, and Consultant services provides around-the-clock, web-based information and learning opportunities. The online **Individualized Photography, Advanced Photography, and Image Analysis Courses** provide members with personalized photography experiences and challenges. *Just imagine the online programs that will be developed in the next few years and the members these programs will attract!*

- PSA has conducted the Youth Showcase Program since 1998; however, PSA services have not addressed the very specific needs of the younger photographer. A **PSA Youth Services Web site** is in development that will be integrated with information regarding the PSA Scholarship Program and accredited photography schools. This program will be available in the spring of 2010. *Can you imagine the changes in PSA that the introduction of youthful members will have?*
- The *PSA Journal* has been the main communication vehicle for the Society and the *Journal's* history was delineated in the history series.
- **PSA-member e-blasts** have begun to quickly share Society policies and developments. This mode of communication will advance and will help to ensure that every member has the latest information.
- The rapid institutionalization of today's social media and social networking means that PSA must incorporate these venues in order to fully communicate with the membership and offer the experiences that are being demanded. Several PSA Region Directors have established **Region Facebook accounts** and send out announcements regarding free Webinars, etc. instantly to all PSA members in the region. A **Facebook group** has been created for PSA members interested in **Underwater Photography**. Those in the group will be able to share hints, ideas, and photos from past trips and learn from others before their next diving trip. *Imagine this instant sharing of information and the members this will attract!*
- Another PSA activity where communication has changed is club judging. In the past a judge might drive several hours to provide cogent remarks to help photographers. Now

remote, real-time judging is available to PSA member clubs via phone and Skype. No longer is there a need to have a “local” judge or even a judge from the club’s country. As long as there is language in common, image critique/evaluation (and club programs) can take place from disparate locations. *Imagine the club programs that will be available in this fashion!*

The history series described PSA as a vibrant, collaborative organization that held joint meetings and other collegial relationships in the Society’s early years.

- Today PSA is again establishing relationships with many of the corporations that develop and supply photography products. The increasing PSA membership is allowing the Society to create **group buying power** and pass this on to the membership in the form of discounts and other added-value services. Member discounts and exclusive services are listed in the **Members Only area** of the PSA Web site.

- The most significant development has been Adobe® sponsoring the **PSA Club Photo Contest**. This is an exciting club activity with a free six-month trial of Adobe Lightroom® available to each member club that will offer a valuable learning opportunity. *Imagine the positive impact of this contest on member clubs!*
- PSA is not the only photographic society and each non-profit organization is not competing for the same potential membership. They should not all be “reinventing the wheel.” **PSA is aggressively extending a welcome to the other societies.** The Australian Photographic Society (APS) and the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA) have joined PSA, and PSA has joined these societies. PSA has learned from these relationships and can *imagine that these insights will increase with continued relationship building!*

Based on the present commitment to meet the needs of its membership, the future looks very bright and filled with opportunities for PSA.

Historical Vignette:

Celebrating the Past and Looking Forward to the Future

This month the *PSA Journal* concludes its twelve-month history series with a look into the future. We know in the past that the Photographic Society of America (PSA) has undergone many changes: e.g., divisions have come and gone; modes of communication have changed radically; international membership has increased tremendously; and so forth. Modifications, which confirm that the Society has shown a willingness and flexibility to transform and adapt to sociological and technological changes in the world. *We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future.* (George Bernard Shaw) This final and current article focuses on the future of PSA.

The *PSA Journal* wishes to thank all of the authors who took time to research a subject and present an article on the history of the Society and to thank all of the members who sent in photographs, which helped to improve the graphic presentation of the series: *Celebrating 75 Years of PSA.*

Celebrating 75 Years of PSA - a thirty-minute slide show is now available from PSA Headquarters.

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