

The Art of Life.



Michael
Timmons
M.Photog., Cr., F-ASP



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One size does not fit all.

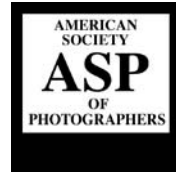
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MAGAZINE



I am crazy.

No doubt a good number of you are looking at the title of this and totally agreeing with me. And that's OK. At least I can admit it.

You see, I decided to open a new studio. Three years after selling my then-20 year old business, I borrowed some money and overhauled the former lumber yard building in the small town of 1,000 that I grew up in here in Iowa.

Yep. Crazy.

Nasty economy. Small town. And the new highway just bypassed the town as well.

What was I thinking?

Well, whatever I was thinking (and, trust me, I was) seems to have worked because we are - in a word - CRAZY busy.

This time I decided to have a plan. An actual business plan that I swore I would follow come hell or high water. There have been a few hellish moments and the toilet backed up once, but we followed the plan. As of the end of the sixth month, I've paid back every penny of the remodeling loan and the appointment book is brimming.

Those who have seen/heard the plan are calling me crazy and I have admitted I am. But crazy and profitable beats just plain crazy any day of the week and twice on Sunday.

See you at Imaging.

--Kalen

Coming Next.

In the next issue watch for the rest of Dan Frievault's article on off camera flash, including more illustrations and post-production information.

You can also plan on a wrap-up of the ASP Annual Banquet which will be held at Imaging USA as well as the first President's Message from incoming ASP President Kathryn Meek.

Are you a fan of the ASP Facebook page yet? If not, no time like the present to click that "like" button.

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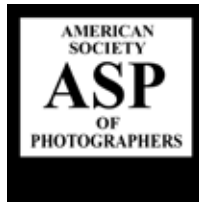
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(319) 671-1771 or email: kdanice@mac.com



Welcome to the **Friends of ASP**. Our newest member benefit.

Your ASP Board of Governors has been working with participating vendors to provide you with special deals reserved specifically for current ASP members. These offers will be honored through Dec. 31, 2011. It couldn't be easier. Simply contact one of the Friends of ASP and identify yourself as a member and provide them with the special **coupon code** you'll receive with your renewal verification. More vendors will be added because you can never have too many friends!

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While artists have been using computers to create and even output images for decades, things didn't really take off until two groups on opposite sides of the U.S. started to put their attentions on a new way of image making.

THE DIGITAL DECADE BEGINS.

*Adapted with images removed from Chapter 1 of Harald Johnson's book, **Mastering Digital Printing, Second Edition, Thomson Course Technology PTR, 2005, ISBN: 1592004318***

Jon Cone's Computer-Assisted Printmaking

In 1980, Jon Cone, who was educated and trained as a traditional fine-art printmaker and who owned an art gallery in New York City's SoHo district, founded an experimental and collaborative printmaking studio in the waterfront town of Port Chester, New York. There, from 1980 to 1984, printmaker Cone worked with artists in the media of silkscreen, intaglio, relief, monoprint, and photogravure.

Sensing, however, that the computer could be an advantageous tool for experimental printmaking and wanting to break away from the pack of other printmakers, many of whom were horrified by what he was doing, Cone started experimenting with scanners and learning computer programming. Combining his skills as a master printmaker and a recent computer geek (he was mesmerized by the 1984 Apple Macintosh TV commercial), he started to shift into a hybrid approach, combining traditional printmaking with a digital component to create what could be best described as computer-assisted original prints and multiples. This was nothing like the push-button inkjet printing that we know today. Cone's collaborative artists would create a digital master either with computer software, by placing objects on the scanner's glass, by painting onto separation mylars--whatever it took to create an image and turn it into a digital state. Cone would then often output the digital files to negative or positive film on

a Linotronic imagesetter, and, in turn, those films would be used to burn silkscreen, photogravure, and etching plates for the final printing on a traditional etching press. An alternative technique was to use a digital Canon copier to create outputs that were used to transfer the image under pressure and with the help of acetone onto printmaking paper. All this was very technical and time-consuming work, but the results were stunning, and Cone's innovative digital editions were shown and sold in New York until 1990 when Cone and his studio relocated to a small, rural village in Vermont to continue with digital-printmaking experiments.

By 1992, Cone had added inkjet printing to his repertoire, but the story now backs up a little and shifts to the West Coast.

Graham Nash and Digital Fine-Art Printing

The photographic side of the equation didn't gel until the paths of six people--a rock star and his best friend, an art publicist, a sales rep, a computer wizard, and a silkscreen printer--unexpectedly intersected in early 1989 in California. Rock

musician Graham Nash (of the legendary group Crosby, Stills, and Nash) had been quietly collecting photographs for years. On the road with the band, Nash and his best friend Mac Holbert, who was also CSN's tour manager, would always hit the local galleries and swap meets looking for visual treasures. In the process, Nash amassed a world-class collection of vintage and contemporary photographs. Nash also took photographs every chance he got, and it was only a



Graham Nash, 2009.

matter of time before he caught the computer bug and started scanning and manipulating his images on the computer screen. Now, this was in the early days (mid '80s), when the scanning was crude and the printing was even worse.

Holbert, who had computerized the band's accounting process early

on, was soon helping Nash with his digital experiments. The two could see the potential of working digitally, but a decent print of what they were viewing on the monitor had so far eluded them. No photo lab had yet figured out how to print from digital files, and the existing digital print devices just weren't up to the task of high-resolution output.

If Nash wanted to start printing and showing his digitally processed black and white images, he was going to have to change gears and move to a new level. He decided to invent a way to do it himself, and to do that, he needed to raise some money, and he needed some help.

Enter Charles Wehrenberg, a San Francisco art publicist and writer. Wehrenberg was a friend of Nash's and a well-known figure in New York and West Coast high-art circles. Once he understood that Nash wanted to sell his photo collection to raise the money to invest in a way to print his photo art, Wehrenberg came up with a plan. He arranged for the collection's sale through New York's venerable auction house, Sotheby's. Their PR machine would beat the drum, and Nash would handle the media like the pro he was. However, Wehrenberg added a twist to the idea. To increase the buzz for the event and for what Nash was trying to do, Wehrenberg orchestrated a concurrent art show of Nash's own photography at the Simon Lowinsky gallery, to be held in New York the day before the Sotheby's sale.

The exhibition was scheduled for the following spring (1990), and Nash began pulling together 16 unique portraits taken over many years of touring with the band. But, there was a major problem. Most of the original negatives (and even the prints) had disappeared when Nash sent them to an art director, and they never returned. All he had were the contact sheet proofs to work from, and these were much too small for making the large display prints the gallery wanted--at least using normal photographic methods.

During his search for high-quality digital output, Nash had discov-



ered Jetgraphix, a design research lab affiliated with UCLA across town from his Encino (Los Angeles) home. Run by former ad agency art director John Bilotta, the studio was a test site for Fuji's experimental, large-format inkjet printers of the same name (Jetgraphix). Nash was intrigued by the prints Bilotta could make, but the resolution was so low ("dots as big as your head") that when Nash asked if he knew of anything better, Bilotta handed him a sales brochure for something called an IRIS printer. (Another person who received a Bilotta brochure was a silkscreen printer named Jack Duganne; more about him shortly.)

Steve Boulter, the West Coast sales rep for Boston-based IRIS Graphics, had been showing test samples and passing out brochures for their new graphic arts, pre-press proofing machine to anyone he could. Boulter was pushing his company to get the IRIS into the hands of more photographers and artists, but the company didn't see much point to it--they were in the commercial graphics business, not the fine-art business. Boulter, however, believed in his idea and continued to make the rounds of art studios and businesses involved with art production. One of his big sales at the end of 1988 was to The Walt Disney Company in Burbank, which

was using the machine to output hardcopy color prints in conjunction with their top secret, computer animation process.

Wehrenberg was already familiar with the IRIS. Artist Richard Lowenberg had shown him some early sample prints, and Wehrenberg liked what he saw. A lot. He called the IRIS company for more information, and they relayed the call to Steve Boulter who happened to be visiting San Francisco. Soon, Boulter was standing at Wehrenberg's dining room table showing off more samples. Impressed all over again, Wehrenberg picked up the phone to call Graham Nash, and he put Boulter on the line to set up a meeting.

Boulter flew to L.A. the following week (in April, 1989), and Nash was equally amazed at the quality of the IRIS prints. He instantly realized that this was the solution to his two-part problem of getting images out of his computer and also making the prints for the Lowinsky show.

However, there was a remaining glitch: how to get the images into the IRIS printer. The machine was meant to be hooked up only to large, proprietary, pre-press systems, not home scanners or Macintosh computers. Boulter knew just the person to solve the problem: David Coons. Coons was

a color engineer for Disney, and he was helping the company make the transition from analog to digital animation. (Coons would receive an Academy Award in 1992 for co-developing Disney's ground-breaking, computer animation production system.) Coons was also the one in charge of running the new IRIS 3024 printer that Boulter had sold them. Boulter introduced Coons to Nash, and soon, Coons was on the team. Working off-hours at Disney and using custom software programs that he wrote specifically for the project, Coons scanned and retouched Nash's proof prints, downloaded them to the IRIS, and printed the edition of images onto thick, Arches watercolor paper.



Nash ultimately met his April 24, 1990 Lowinsky exhibition deadline, and the following day's sale at Sotheby's brought in \$2.17 million, a record for a private photographic collection. The world's first series of all-digitally printed, photographic fine art drew crowds and raves in New York and, as the show traveled, in Tokyo and Los Angeles. (A set of those prints later sold at auction at Christie's for \$19,500.)

Now it was realized that the plan had worked perfectly and digital prints were on the art map. Even before the show, while Coons was moonlighting at Disney to output the print portfolios, Nash, Boulter, Wehrenberg, Coons, and eventually Holbert were kicking around the idea of setting up a shop to produce these new digital prints on a commercial basis. Coons was already experimenting with non-Nash images including several for artist Sally Larsen, who was Wehrenberg's wife. Graham Nash soon bought one of the \$126,000 IRIS machines and installed it in July 1990 in the small garage of an old house he owned in nearby Manhattan Beach, a suburb of Los Angeles. By August, Steve Boulter had moved into the top floor of the garage, and David Coons was making the long commute from

Burbank each day with nine-track computer tapes of images that needed printing for a new edition of Nash portraits to be shown in Tokyo in November, 1990.

Remember our friend, serigrapher Jack Duganne? He soon found out about what was going on in Manhattan Beach. It wasn't far from his studio in Santa Monica, so Duganne, who could see the digital writing on the wall, started bringing digital tapes of his art clients' scanned images over for printing. By February, 1991, he was printing on the IRIS himself as a Nash Editions' employee. Duganne took to the IRIS quickly, developing new printing procedures and in the process becoming Nash's master printmaker. While there, Duganne also came up with the term "giclée", but more about that later.

The work for outside clients continued to grow, and as Coons and Boulter began to spend less time at the Manhattan Beach studio, it became clear that someone would need to manage this new business enterprise if it were going to succeed. Coons had been running things while Nash and Holbert were on the road with CSN, but when the last tour ended in June, 1991, Holbert moved down from his home in Santa Cruz and took over the managing of the shop. On July 1, 1991, Graham Nash and Mac Holbert officially opened Nash Editions, the world's first professional, all-digital printmaking studio.

The Revolution Takes Off

By 1993, a mere handful of digital printmaking studios--including Nash Editions (L.A.), Harvest Productions (Anaheim, California), Cone Editions (Vermont), Adamson Editions (Washington, D.C.), Digital Pond (San Francisco), and Thunderbird Editions (Clearwater, Florida)--were busy on both U.S. coasts. All were using IRIS inkjet technology to make fine-art prints for photographers and artists. Soon, there were a dozen similar shops (many set up by Jon Cone), then many dozen, then scores. Today, there are anywhere from 2,500 to 5,000 professional or commercial printmakers making digital prints for artists the world over.

Where Are They Now?

Jon Cone would go on to many other milestones, and he remains a key player in the digital printing world. Graham Nash still takes photographs and is the figurehead of Nash Editions, while Mac Holbert continues to run the day-to-day operations. David Coons and his first wife, Susan, opened their own fine-art scanning service (ArtScans) two doors down from Nash Editions in 1993. Steve Boulter is a consultant to the digital imaging industry. Charlie Wehrenberg still lives in San Francisco and continues to work in the art world. Jack Duganne opened his own digital printmaking studio (Duganne Ateliers) in Santa Monica in 1996. All seven remain actively involved with art in general and with digital printmaking in particular.

NASH EDITIONS WILL BE THE RECIPIENT OF THE ASP INTERNATIONAL AWARD AT THE 2011 ASP AWARDS BANQUET.

ASP@ImagingUSA

*All Events held in Grand Hyatt Hotel.

ASP Board of Governors Meeting • Sunday, Jan. 16th, 6 a.m.- 8 a.m., Lone Star Ballroom A, 2nd floor

ASP General Membership Meeting • Sunday, Jan. 16th, 8 a.m.-10 a.m., Lone Star Ballroom A, 2nd floor

ASP Awards Banquet Cocktail Hour • Monday, Jan. 17th, 6-7 p.m., Foyer of Texas Ballroom A/B 4th Level

ASP Awards Banquet • Monday, Jan. 17th, 7-9:30 p.m., Texas Ballroom A/B, 4th Level

ASP President's Reception • Monday, Jan. 17th, 9:30 p.m., Texas Ballroom C, 4th Level

• **Buying Tickets.** You should purchase banquet tickets directly on your ASP renewal notices. If you've already returned your form, contact Jon Allyn (jonallyn@aol.com) or 800-638-9609 to purchase. Tickets are \$60 each if purchased before Dec. 1, 2010; \$65 each if purchased between Dec. 1, 2010 and Jan. 2, 2011; \$75 each if purchased after Jan. 2, 2011. **Order early!**

• **Picking Up Tickets.** Starting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 16th, head on over to the ASP Booth (located adjacent to PPA Registration) to pick up your tickets and select your seating. All seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis

The ASP Banquet has sold out five years in a row, so get your tickets early. Non-members are welcome. You might need a note from your mother to have this much fun so don't miss out!

2011 Board Nominations

The Nominating Committee of the American Society of Photographers has placed the following slate for 2011 election.

Chairman of the Board – Rick Trummer

President – Kathryn Meek

President Elect – Jim Churchill

Vice President – Doran Wilson

Secretary-Treasurer – Randy McNeilly

Governor – Gabriel Alonzo

Governor – Dennis Hammon

Incumbent for re-election

Governor – Kalen Henderson

Any ASP Member wishing to run from the floor must contact Executive Director Jon Allyn at 800-638-9609, prior to December 20, 2010, to request nomination papers.

Service Award

The ASP Service Award was established to recognize ASP members who devote their time and talents serving the ASP. The black ribbon and medallion is a symbol of hard work and an indication of selfless character of the person who wears it.

Members who have accumulated a minimum of 25 credits, of which 15 must be service credits, may receive this award at the ASP banquet in San Antonio, Texas, in 2011.

For more information about the Service Award and how credits are obtained, go to www.ASofP.com. You can submit your credits by downloading the Service Award Credit Report Form from the membership section and sending it to Kathryn Meek, 125 Albert Pike, Hot Springs, AR 71913 or emailing it to meek-photo@sbcglobal.net.

You can start getting involved in your ASP by attending the general membership meeting at IUSA in San Antonio and letting the board know that you are available to help.

I am a natural light shooter, but in my quest to offer something different to my clients, I have been adding off camera flash to my sessions and loving the results. Off camera flash or OCF is a relative new technique that is rockin' the senior and wedding market. Get in on the ground level and your studio will be

of using OCF, you can now create stunning portraits anywhere, anytime. There are many different methods, techniques and equipment to achieve the OCF look and each have their positives and negatives. I have two setups that I use depending on the intensity of the sun and the effect I want to produce. My

face is in the shade and creates a rim light around your subject. The further your subject is from anything in the background the better. I then position my light about 45 degrees to camera left about 6-8 feet from the subject, just out of camera view using a 15mm lens. A 15mm lens allows me to shoot close to my

The Drama of Off Camera Flash

carving out a niche style that will set your studio apart from the competition and probably increase your averages.



Figure 1: Subject with direct sun in the background and strobe off to camera right. 1/200 - f22 - ISO 50.

The beauty of OCF is its versatility, you can shoot at anytime of the day and get great results (figure 1). OCF especially shines (pun intended) at the worst time of the day for most photographers... high noon, bright sunlight! With the knowledge

powerful set-up is a Part 1 • By Dan Frievalt
White Lightning 1800 strobe, 24" x 36" Paul C. Buff Foldable Softbox, Vagabond II battery pack, Canon 5D Mark II and a Radio Popper JrX Studio Kit. When the light is softer and I don't need as much power, I use one Canon 580 EX II with the Radio Popper JrX and RP cube. The Radio Popper JrX system allows me to control the output of my strobe or flash right from the transmitter on camera. I can even control multiple lights from the camera with this system, a real convenience and time saver. I especially like to use OCF to "overpower" the sun to create a dramatic effect. The easiest way to achieve this effect is to make sure you have enough power which is why I like to use the Vagabond II and the 1800. It is much harder to do with a single or even multiple speedlights.

I usually position the subject with their back to the sun, this makes sure their

subject and include a majority of the sky which adds to the drama of the image. Next I raise the light high enough to create a highlight in my subjects eyes at about 10 o'clock. Then I set my camera on manual; white balance on shade preset; ISO 100 with a shutter speed of 1/200, the sync speed of my Canon 5D Mark II. Finally I meter the sky to create a deep dark appearance, usually 1-2 stops underexposed. I take an exposure and adjust the intensity of the strobe via the Radio Popper transmitter to my liking, which is usually full power with my set up. What you are looking for is enough light on the subjects face and body so that it looks natural and not too powerful that it washes them out. Adjust the intensity of your strobe to your liking. Its just that simple to achieve the dramatic look of OCF!



If you don't want to include the sun in your composition (figure 2), you can position the subject with the sun to your subjects left or right, just make sure you turn your subjects face away from the sun to create shade on their face. Position your strobe the same as before, underexpose the sky and adjust the intensity of your strobe to your liking. I usually I have to turn down my strobe to 3/4 or 1/2 power to achieve a proper exposure on the subjects face depending on the brightness of the day.

Experiment with moving the light and your subject to get different looks. Here I posed the subject in profile and moved the strobe to light directly into my subjects face.

More on OCF from Dan Frievalt in the next issue of the ASP Magazine. Don't miss it.

ACHIEVEMENT



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THE
Art
OF
Life

Michael
Timmons

M.Photog., Cr., F-ASP

THE MEASURE OF A MAN'S LIFE IS DETERMINED BY MANY FACTORS.

The things that he accomplished are by far the least of these. For a man who has accomplished many things and never touched the hear of others is like a sound that is made in the forest and never heard.



To see life is not to know life. To dream and never achieve is like walking in a circle; you will get some exercise but you will never reach your goal. I have been guilty of many sins in life and have been forgiven, in this I rest assured. However to never convey love or beauty to the lives of others cannot be forgiven.

Overlooking the waves crashing on the shore of Lake Huron, I ponder the questions that all of us ask ourselves at least once, if not many times, during the course of our lives. Who am I? What is my purpose here? Most important of all, what will my legacy be?

My journey began, many years ago in a world that up until now I had almost forgotten. It was spring in 1958 when I was brought into this world in New Orleans, Louisiana. My mother was a refugee from Germany, surviving the "Death March" at the end of World War II. My father, a shoe salesman, was a veteran of the U.S. Navy during the war. They were barely surviving on substandard wages in a land that was on the brink of Nuclear War.

My parents divorced and my mother suffered a nervous breakdown. I was placed in foster care and eventually into a "children's home" in St. Louis, Missouri. I was just a child, not able to comprehend what was happening to me. I remember being alone, afraid and separated from the family that I knew. There is not a lot more to remember during these days of confusion, save one, the death of President John F. Kennedy. Even though I was only five years old, I remember crying when the funeral procession was shown on television. The coffin draped in an American flag; the crowds, and the grown-ups around me, all crying. Later in life, I would come back to this memory for some reason. Perhaps it made me realize that, indeed, one person could make a difference in the world.

My mother recovered and soon I was back with my brother and younger sister and starting a new school. I was in the third grade and my life had taken a new path: I was grateful. I had already seen a side of life that, thankfully, most will never see. This experience, even though I was young, would serve to build the person that

I would become. My mother did the best that could be expected of a single woman raising three children on her own in the 60's. From her I would learn **determination**.

I remember being ten years old and seeing a television program on Alaska. I was mesmerized and thought how neat it would be to go there. How cool it would be to see the mountains, the snow, and the "Eskimos". These things seemed nearly impossible for a child of ten. I would spend most of my adult life dreaming this same dream.

High school presented me with a whole new set of experiences. I learned about girls and team sports. I learned about rejection and triumph, love and loss. I was being recruited by some prestigious colleges for scholarships in athletics. Life was good and the future looked bright until a fateful fall night in October of 1975. A career ending knee injury left me without a plan. With scholarships gone and dreams of an athletic career shattered, I learned about **disappointment**.

They say that fate plays a big part in what your life is all about and I guess, to some extent that is true; I also believe that you can take advantage of life's experiences and mold your own future, what happened next was pure fate. Nothing that I could have imagined in my head could prepare me for the twists and turns ahead.

I was 17 and had no plans for the future. My friends were all expecting to go off to college or the service and I was sitting in my room, my leg in a cast, crutches leaning against the wall, wondering how life could be so cruel. I was naïve, as many are at this age, that what had happened to me was so tragic. I went in to talk to my advisor, Mrs. Pope, at school; she would take me down a path that I had not expected. There was a program at our school that allowed seniors who had enough credits to graduate an opportunity to schedule a three hour block of time for alternative studies. One of the programs being offered was photography. I thought to myself, what an easy way to blow off half a day of school so I signed up.

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My mom took me to a pawn shop in downtown St. Louis and bought me my first 35mm camera. It was a Miranda "Zenit E" and it cost \$50. This camera would teach me more about photography than I wanted to know at the time. It was fully manual in every respect, no bells or whistles. After focusing, you would have to adjust the aperture for a proper exposure, or the view finder was too dark. I learned a lot during that class about exposure, reciprocity, and the mechanics of photography. But it was in the darkroom that I learned the magic of photography. After seeing my first roll of film come out of the wash and my first print develop in the Dektol that I had mixed myself, I was hooked. For me it would begin a journey that would be filled with excitement and accomplishment.

I still had some decisions to make about my future. It was the spring of my senior year, 1976. I enlisted in the United States Air Force. I was excited about the promises that were made by the recruiter, training, advancement, college education. I went for my physical, filled with anticipation and excitement, only to be denied. My knee injury was so bad that they could not accept me. I was devastated, another disappointment. Back to square one.

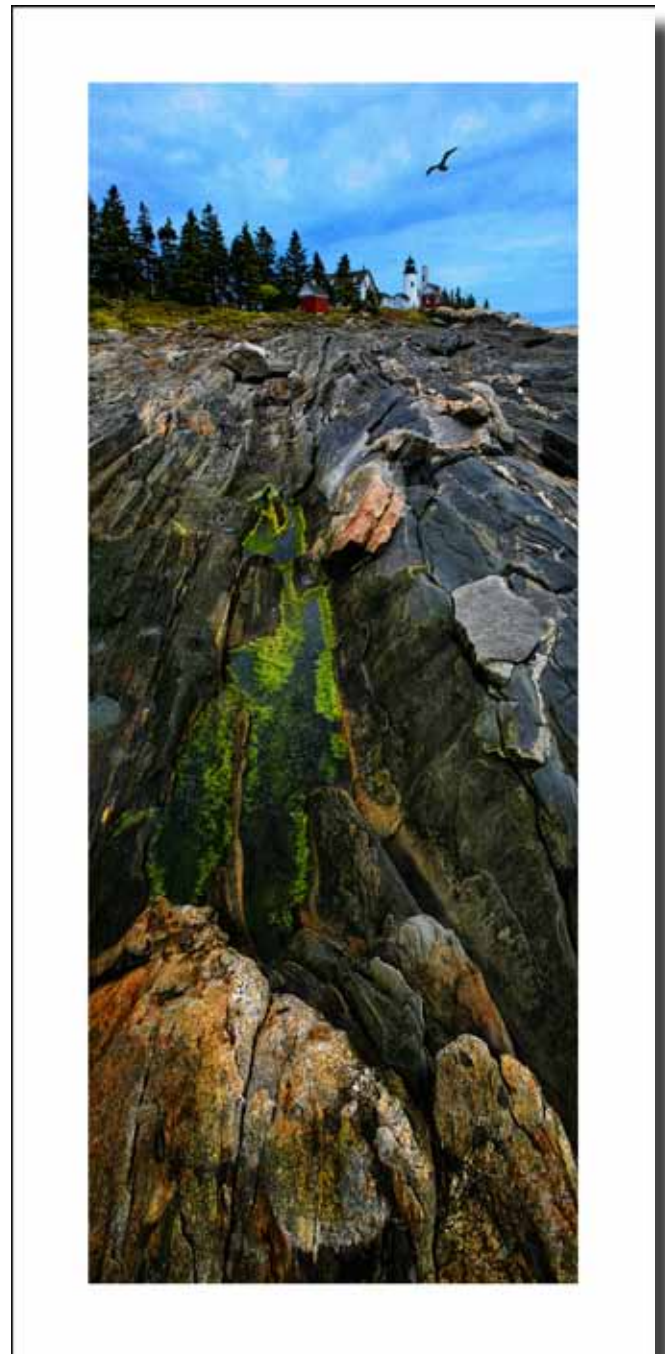
During this time I was photographing my friends at school. Mostly sports action shots, but my nights were filled with still life shots being set up in my basement. Using various backgrounds and crude lights, I would photograph flowers, bottles, boxes, anything was fair game. Photographing landscapes and scenics would teach me about patterns of light, shading, and composition. I dreamed of becoming Ansel Adams, photographing the world around me. Sharing these images with my teachers and advisor would bring much encouragement. From them I would gain **confidence**.

I have always believed that we are a product of our life experiences; it is these experiences that make us who we are. Some of these are within our control and others are not. In the following months I would learn in the real world about these character building events in life.

I enrolled and was accepted in college the following fall at Central Missouri State University. They had a photography program and again I was excited to gain knowledge in my new chosen path. I graduated from high school and went to Arkansas to spend the summer with my father. We had not been close as I was growing up, mostly summer visits and an occasional holiday. The visits were always stressful and emotional. My plans were to spend the summer and then go off to college. It would never happen. In late summer, I suffered my first heart attack. It was a shock to everyone in my family. It was one of those heart

attacks that you hear about with young athletes collapsing on the field or court. I was in denial about the severity and it would be 30 years later before I would learn about the damage that was truly done.

My father was in poor health and I decided to delay my college experience for a year, then two. As it turns out, it was a decision well made. During this time we became the father and son you hear about. We would spend our days golfing, and getting to know one another. My father taught me the importance of what you do in life. How a man is mea-





During this time I met and married my first wife Debbie. Over the next twenty one years we raised three wonderful children. We would build a home, work and grow. As a new husband and father, I needed to get a job. There were no photography related jobs to be had so I took on a variety of different occupations. I installed car stereos, television antennas, managed an electronics store and delivered pizzas. I did a little photography on the side, but never for pay. I did what needed to be done to survive.

In October of 1979, I went to work as a law enforcement officer. Starting out as a radio operator, I soon went to the Law Enforcement Training Academy and graduated at the top of my class. I began as a road deputy and soon advanced to become the youngest criminal investigator in the state of Arkansas. It was during the first year that I would have another brush with death; a bullet came into my car and lodged into the cowl to the left of my head, missing me by inches. Once again, I was lucky to be alive. The second time in three years that my life was nearly cut short. Four years later, the fire was still burning in my heart for photography. By chance I met someone who shared my interest in creating images. Randy Dunham was a uniform shop owner and had some scenic images on his wall. This led to a conversation and the formation of a partnership. In the coming months we would start a business and begin photographing portraits and weddings. We would move the clothing racks at night and do our appointments; we would learn and grow together.

I learned about and joined the Professional Photographers of America in 1983, and the Arkansas Professional Photographers Association soon after. I also became a member of the Professional Photographers of the Ozarks. I was hungry to learn and experience all that photography had to offer. I entered my first print competition and it was a disaster. Not a print over 74 and some much lower.

At the next print competition I met someone who would teach and mentor me. This would change my life and photography forever. I would listen and learn, as we spent the next five hours going from print to print in the display. He showed me what was good and what was bad about every print. It was a marathon, and we still fondly refer to this as print class 101. Dave Swoboda is, and was at that time, a very giving person. He was honest, sometimes brutal, but always encouraging. He shared with me things that I could have never learned on my own. I am eternally grateful. He taught me things about my photography that have helped me when times were bad, profited me when times were good, and still help me in these uncertain times. It was Dave who taught me to find the "inner Image" in every print. That part of the image that had the redeeming values to do well and last. He fueled my passion for print competition and for life. Everything that I have accomplished in print competition I owe to Dave. He changed my life forever. He taught me the value of **excellence**.

sured and how your word is your bond. He was old school and instilled in me the importance of doing what you say you will do. My father died at the age of 52, after a series of heart attacks and strokes. I miss him deeply. From him I learned about **reputation**.

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It was shortly after this that I met Frank Kristian. I studied his work and bought his book on composition. He taught me the concept of “How much is too little, how little is too much”. He instilled in me the value of “positive and negative space”, and most of all the importance of composition. It was after reading his book several times and attending his program for the third time that it began to sink in. I saw him a few years later at Winona School in Chicago, and didn’t recognize him because he was so ill. He died soon afterwards and I remember upon hearing the news, I wept. He was a great man and a great influence on the photographer that I would become. From Frank I learned the value of **composition**.



I settled into the business of photography and the business grew fast. Armed with the knowledge that I had gained through the various associations, I would prosper. Through my involvement in the community, I was asked to teach photography at the local community college. I was apprehensive at first but accepted the challenge. It would prove to be one of the best learning experiences of my life. Through the next few years, Randy and I would expand our business and relocate twice. Each new studio was larger and more impressive than the previous storefront. After buying Randy out, the studio moved to Main Street, the busiest area of town. This historical location was Mountain Home’s first schoolhouse, built in the 1800’s. It was indeed a showplace with two camera rooms and an outdoor shooting area. I would market to 1000 seniors within a sixty mile radius and photograph about 500 of them every year. But my passion to become an artist remained. Photographing landscapes and scenics was my release from the pressures of everyday life.

I would study and pass the certification exam from Professional Photographers of America and begin the first leg of my journey to a Masters Degree. I soon began speaking and sharing my knowledge on a grander scale, I become proficient at print competition, earning my Craftsman Degree in Orlando, Florida, and my Master’s degree in Nashville, Tennessee. I attended the judge’s workshop at Winona in Chicago, Illinois. I met a whole new set of friends. It was here that I met Don Emmerich, someone who would again influence me without knowing it. Sitting next to him in the back of the room, he put many things into perspective for me: the importance of what we do, the skill set required to accomplish our goals, how the technical aspects of what we do matter. He also shared with me the concept that one’s accomplishments do not create the sum of a man. From Don I learned the value of **education**.



It was then that I would team up with Gary Meek and Arnie Burton and share photography with others by teaching a certification class for several years in Arkansas. Each of us had the technical knowledge and experience to help others achieve their goals. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. These two men taught me the value of **sharing**.

I then met Bruce Smith and Fred Hinegardner, two unique individuals who would leave an impression on me. My creativity would be unleashed in part by their influence. I remember a program they gave at Heart of America one night that transformed me.

Bruce was instrumental in getting me approved as an International Juror, sending my form overnight from his hospital bed. I remember when Bruce passed, again I wept. I had the honor of attending "his" convention and judging after he had died. There was a print of his daughter sitting on his lap in the competition, I was overcome with emotion and had to leave the judging. I have that print hanging in my artist's space to this day, along with a portrait of Bruce by Fred Hinegardner, two of my most cherished possessions. Bruce taught me about the **frailty of life**.

I spent a day studying with Fred. I have jokingly said that I spent a week with Fred one afternoon. He shared



with me his inner most thoughts about some of his most thought provoking works. He showed me hundreds of drawings that he had created for one of his pieces. Then he showed me the one he selected, one of his earlier drawings. I asked him why he had drawn the others after that one. He said, "Sometimes you have to go beyond what you have done to realize that what you did was good enough". It was a revelation to me, and a profound statement of fact. Fred taught me the value of an **artist's heart**.

There have been many others over the course of my career that I have learned from. Pho-

tographers, both famous and unknown, who have molded me, and taught me about my craft. I would come to value the friendships too, people who would become lifelong friends because of my involvement with photography. Far too many to mention, with the exception of four, Dave Huntsman, Rod Brown, Jim Frieze and, years later, Andrew Jenkins. I would share with these friends things about myself that no one else would ever know. I would come to love these men as brothers, both in and out of photography. They taught me the value of **friendship**.

It was fall of 1995; I was distracted from my photography. I guess that you could say I was burned out a little bit and needed a change. Allen Edwards worked as an entertainer in Branson, Missouri, and was looking for a front man to emcee his shows. We had become good friends through photography; he was a client and we shared a law enforcement background. The studio was in capable hands which enabled me to experience this new adventure in life.

Allen was well received in the entertainment business and he enjoyed it. I remember being back stage one night, thousands of people in the audience, wondering what I was doing there. It had been over a year, I had just returned from judging in Atlanta when it dawned on me; the entertainment business was not my dream, not my passion and certainly not my future. I quit and returned to what I loved doing most, photography.

I returned with fervor, recapturing the love that I had and rebuilding a business that I had neglected for too long. It was a challenge and I put my heart and soul into it. We were rolling again, sales were climbing and the future looked bright. Things were going well, in photography at least.

But life was about to turn me upside down again, blindsiding me and leaving me in a state of turmoil. In all of this success my wife Debbie and I had slowly drifted apart. She had her own business and I was deeply involved in mine. We no longer shared the same focus or devotion to our relationship. It was my fault, but by the time we both realized what was happening, it was too late. Explaining divorce to our children was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life.

August 3, 1998, I met the person I had needed my whole life, Tina. I just didn't know it. We were at the PPA convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, strangely enough, my birthplace. We had met before and I had felt a strange feeling in my very being, I had resisted it and moved on, or so I thought. We talked throughout the entire night, about photography, life and things that friends talk about. I was leaving the next day and as I left in the taxi to the airport, I had tears in my eyes.

We were together again in Las Vegas in January of 1999. We spent the days shooting in the desert, on the Vegas Strip and Red Rock Canyon. We could stand in the same spot and see things entirely different. We were together in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, later that same year and again the photography was magical, I was smitten and I knew that there was no turning back for me. I realized that I had fallen



in love with her. There were so many obstacles to overcome, and the wake of destruction would bring a heavy toll on the both of us.

Tina opened up a whole new existence for me. We became good friends and confidants. Spending hours on the phone, we fell in love. It was not intended, but it happened. Because of her I began writing poetry and short stories, entering an entirely new creative phase of my life. I had always enjoyed the beauty of my surroundings but they now took on an entirely new focus. I began to become an encourager, sending out daily words of inspiration to people of all vocations. This list grew to over 2000 people over the course of one year. It was an amazing experience for me.



In July of 2000, I dissolved my business and moved to Michigan to be with Tina. We embarked on a journey that seemed comfortable to me. She understood my creative needs and made my lifelong desire to be an artist a reality. Soon after our wedding in 2003, she took over all of the portrait work in our studio, allowing me to concentrate on the art of photography and scenics that had burned into my soul so many years ago.

Moving to Michigan introduced me to an entirely new world of friends. I have had the opportunity to meet and become friends with some wonderful people. One of these is Helen Yancy. I had known Helen years before and had even served on a committee with her in the past. In the short time that we have been friends, I have learned valuable lessons from her. One of these lessons is honesty. I have come to respect her for her years of dedicated service and the way she deals with people. Her knowledge and reputation are without blemish. Helen taught me the value of **integrity**.

In May of 2004 we opened a storefront Art Gallery in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Gallery 143 was the realization of a lifelong dream for me and a new endeavor for Tina. We had the Gallery in the front of the building and the studio in the back. We began selling fine art to businesses, corporations and individuals. Little did we know that this would become a major boost to our income and save us in dying economic times. We have since closed the Gallery to better service our corporate clients, cut our overhead, and allow us to travel more. This was a start to a whole new way of business and life. We are now working out of our home, teaching all over the world, and more secure in our decisions.



On the occasion of my 50th birthday, Tina surprised me with a trip and cruise to Alaska. Nineteen days in the state that I had dreamt about for the last 40 years. It was a childhood dream about to come true. It took me back to the age of ten and the excitement that I had at that time. It was all that I had imagined and more. My age made it that much better, as I could appreciate the beauty that surrounded me. The entire time I didn't want to sleep, I wept at times at the surreal beauty that was around me. I was mature enough to enjoy it and was adept in my craft enough to record it. I held Tina at the end of the trip and jokingly told her that I could die happy now, my biggest dream had become a reality. Little did I know what life had planned for me.



I have always loved judging and it was following the International Judging in 2008 that I nearly died again. Less than three weeks after returning from Alaska. I was having dinner with Tina and friends in Daytona



Beach, Florida, when I began to feel ill. After dinner, I returned to the hotel and felt somewhat better. After flying home, Tina had to rush me to the hospital with heart attack symptoms. The doctor was talking to her on the phone and he didn't think I would survive.

I had emergency surgery to fix an electrical problem with my heart. The doctor told me that by the symptoms I described in Florida, I should have died that night. This same heart problem

is probably what took my father's life at such a young age. Again I was lucky to be alive. I needed to make amends with those that I had wronged. I no longer had the capacity to hate or hold a grudge. I remembered Bruce Smith, and the life lesson that he had taught me. It rang true in my heart. I will not forget again. It was at this point in my life that I learned the value of friendships, but more importantly, the concept of forgiveness. I have always loved nature photography and it has been my passion all of my adult life. I was sidetracked in the early years with portraiture and making a living. It wasn't until I had the proper support that I was able to realize my photography goals. I now create art that sells and encourages. I teach what I have learned to others in hopes that they can reach those same goals and dreams. I know that the great Creator has something planned for my future, based on the number of times that He has spared my life.



The future is filled with the promise of more travel, teaching, and adventure. I am sure that more lessons are yet to be learned and I hope that as I mature

even more, I will be humble in my opinions and true to my heart. I will endeavor to create more images, to share more knowledge and to lend a helping hand to my friends and students. I will not sit back and enjoy past accomplishments, or dwell on them. I will evolve as I have in the past and I will embrace the changes that will surely come. I hope to repay the lessons that I have learned, by teaching and sharing with others. I cannot think of a better way to repay the kindnesses that have been shown to me.

To many people, photography is a means to an end, a job so to speak. To me it is so much more. It is an existence, a way of life. I believe that the art of photography is part of my very being. I know that I didn't always feel that way, that there were other vocations in my life. But the truth is, after seeing that first roll of film and that first print, I changed. No matter how far I drifted away, or tried to ignore the feelings inside me, photography brought me back.

We, as photographers, change the world. Our images have impact on almost every aspect of life. Some tragic and some sad, some bring us joy and others fear. From photojournalism to fine art, we capture life in a frac-

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tion of a second, and bring into being a moment in time that most would miss, except for the camera.

Photography has been my one constant through the years. The creative outlet that it affords me is the very keeper of my sanity. Without it, I would be adrift in the cold waters of the mundane. Was it chance or was it fate that brought me into this career? Perhaps it was divine intervention, I really don't know. What I do know is that I am happy to be an artist, a manipulator of light and a creator of images.

I have heard it said that if you "find something that you love, you won't have to work a day in your life".



I don't know about that because there is plenty of hard work in this profession. What I do know, is that the toils of this profession help to create joy and happiness for others. It can bring laughter or sorrow, it can inspire or deter, but regardless of the facts, it provokes thought and interpretation by the viewer.

But there has to be more, doesn't there? If not, why is there a long-



ing in my soul to do more and to create new images? If I have attained all that I desired so many years ago, why is there still emptiness inside of me? Why do I feel the urge to continue to learn and grow in this profession? Why don't I just quit?

That is the beauty of what we do as photographers. We are never satisfied with what we have already done; the next image that we create is bound to be better than the last one.

I remember using all the colors in the crayon box when I was a child. I look at photography this way. We are and have always been a



creative species. We were, after all, designed by the great Creator. It is in our nature, our souls and our hearts. Somewhere along the line it was programmed out of us. Probably in early childhood when we were taught that all flowers are red and the grass is always green. There is a song by Harry Chapin that reflects this same thought process. I sometimes play it in my classes. It is called "Roses are Red".



We have to encourage ourselves to get back in touch with this inner child in some way, to release the creative energy that resides inside our minds. We must at some point leave the security of our world and delve into the unknown, the uncharted waters of our souls. We must learn to "be" who we really are. If not, we will suffer the anxiety of a tortured existence. How can we achieve this new level of consciousness? I believe we can do this by releasing our inhibitions



talents for good purpose. We have an obligation, be it only self-imposed, to record life as we see it, and share this vision with those who cannot or will not see it for themselves.

It is never known when a man is to die, but I do know this, I have many images yet to create, many stories yet to tell and many lives yet to touch. I will evolve as I have in the past and I will embrace the changes that will surely come.

hind my interpretation of the world around me by sharing the beauty of what I see and bringing these images to others who may not be able to experience that moment in time for themselves. I want to leave this earth a little better and more beautiful than it was when I got here.

As I reflect on the things that I have written, I realize that every life is a work of art. For as much as a musician plays his instrument, a singer uses his voice or a sculptor creates with his hands, so has



and trying new things. Conquer our fears and head into a direction of chance and risk.

We need to evolve to survive, and we must create to live. How easy this seems to be, yet many will not risk the security of their current way of doing things to get there. It's not really that hard, but it does take faith. In the course of my life I have been in desperate situations on more than one occasion. God has always provided in these times of desperation.

What we do as artists in our lives helps to define us. The deeds that we do and the images that we create will become our legacy. Our collection of images will show how we used the talents that we were given in life and if we used those

I have found the answers to some of my earlier questions. Who am I? I am an artist; a creator of images that I hope inspires others. I am a collection of my experiences, my friendships and my failures. Why am I here? To be an encourager to those that I meet, to help others reach their goals in life and photography. I am here to share love, happiness and joy, with my friends, mentors, and students. What will my legacy be? That has yet to be determined. It is my sincere desire to leave be-

God created these experiences for me. Carefully, He painted with His brush the canvas of my life, stroke by loving stroke. It is not my will, but His that has brought me to this point in my life. So I ask all of you who read this, take time to reflect on your own path, knowing that all things have purpose, and we are all a product of our own experiences. Then perhaps you too can enjoy the "Art of Life".



Michael Timmons, M. Photog., Cr., F-ASP, received his ASP Fellowship in 2010. He and his wife, Tina, own and operate The Portrait Gallery in Vassar, Michigan. You can read more about Michael on his website at www.theportraitgallery.net.

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Michael Timmons is the current Vice Chairman of the Photographic Exhibition Committee and has been nominated for the PPA Board of Directors.





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