

# *Bluenose Focus*

The Newsletter of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia  
August 2013 Volume 48 Issue 3

In this issue:

2012-13 Awards Banquet

2012-13 Trophies and Awards

2012-13 Winning Images

Biding Time in Texas

Cover Image by George Mitchell



# Bluenose Focus

The Newsletter of the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia  
August 2013 Volume 48 Issue 3

## In This Issue

Editor's Corner	3
President's Message	4
PSA Report	6
CAPA News	8
In Memoriam	10
2011-12 Awards Banquet	11
2011-12 Trophies and Awards	12
2011-12 Award Presentations	17
2011-12 Winning Images	21
Biding Time in Texas	31

## Newsletter submissions

We welcome your submissions to Bluenose Focus, and will do our best to make sure that the best submissions make it into the newsletter.

Articles prepared using any current software may be submitted. Should there be a difficulty, the Editor will get in touch.

Submitted images should be JPEG format, sRGB colour space, and high resolution.

Submissions should be e-mailed to:

[gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca](mailto:gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca)

## The Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia

### Directors

President:	Laszlo Podor
Vice-President:	<i>Vacant</i>
Past-President:	Dean Hirtle
Recording Secretary:	Pam Mills
Newsletter Editor:	George Mitchell
Treasurer:	Dean Hirtle

### Standing Committee Chairs

Program:	Fred Greene
Entry:	Wayne Garland
Judging:	Fred Greene
PSA Representative:	Viki Gaul
CAPA Representative:	Joyce Chew

### Other Committees

Public Relations:	John Wm. Webb
Honours and Awards:	Esther Thériault
Seminars:	Fred Greene
Nominating:	Dean Hirtle
Constitution and By-Laws:	Joyce Chew
Projection:	Joyce Chew
Host:	Laszlo Podor
Hospitality:	<i>Vacant</i>
Banquets:	Etta Parker
A/V Advisor:	Bill Murphy, Mervyn Kumar-Misir Peter Steeper
Statistician:	Nick Honig
Webmaster:	Darryl Robertson
Judging Equipment:	Hubert Boudreau
Event Photographer:	Hubert Boudreau
Workshops/Field Trips:	Fred Greene
Shubenacadie Wildlife Park Guides:	Jen Fried Vic Fraser, Doug Leahy
Outside Evaluations:	Colin Campbell
Digital Coordinator:	Mervyn Kumar-Misir

Visit [www.photoguild.ns.ca](http://www.photoguild.ns.ca) for more information



# Editor's Corner

By George Mitchell

The 2013-14 season is beginning! The schedule is now available at the PGNS website, <http://www.photoguild.ns.ca/>. As you will see, the year is packed with competitions, seminars, and field trips.

Much of this issue of the Bluenose Focus is taken up with the Awards Banquet, including presentations of Certificates and Trophies. There are many images, which seems appropriate for a photography newsletter. I made an effort to include all the 1st and 2nd place images in the various categories, and to show them at a reasonably large size. I began this practice last August because this newsletter seems to be the only place to easily access the best images of a given year.

Another highlight of this issue is an illustrated account by Jennifer Raven of her recent visit to rural Texas, "Biding Time in Texas" (no, Nick, not Birding!). My only visit to Texas was a fast drive through the Panhandle and I had no burning desire to go back. Jennifer, however, was sufficiently impressed to hope for a second visit, so perhaps it should be on my list.

Again, I encourage you, our members, to submit images, news items, and articles for future issues of the Bluenose Focus. You can reach me at [gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca](mailto:gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca).

## 2013-14 Guild Themes At A Glance

1st Guild Assignment

"Triangle(s)"

(Must have been photographed after May 1, 2013)

2nd Guild Assignment

"Rustic"

(Must have been photographed after September 1, 2013)

3rd Guild Assignment

"From the Kitchen"

(Must have been photographed after September 1, 2013)

# President's Message

By Laszlo Podor



This last summer was faster than ever. I trust you all had a lot of fun and we will see those great images during this coming season. The highlight of my summer was the field trip to Bonaventure Island – Nick and Tuma have done a great job in organizing the trip and we all had a great time there.

You are probably surprised to read the President's season opener message from me the third time. Yes, this is the first time in the Photo Guild's history to have the same president for three consecutive years. No, I am not that good - but the Guild needed me to fill in the position for an extra year.

Our Program Chair, Fred Greene has produced an excellent program for this coming season. There will be numerous field trips, seminars and workshops during the year, just like in the last season. You can view or download the program on our web site ([www.photoguild.ns.ca](http://www.photoguild.ns.ca)) or pick up one of the printed copies on one of our regular meetings at the Museum of Natural History.

As you browse through the program, you will notice that there is a change in our

meeting days. Our meetings will be held on the first and fourth Sunday of the month and the second and third Mondays. Hopefully this will work much better for you and those members, who are members of the Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society as well, will be able to come to our fourth meeting every month.

We had five categories for prints in PSA last year. Large Colour, Small Colour, Large B&W, Small B&W and the new Creative Print categories. We keep all five categories for this season but we increased the limit to maximum 5 prints and maximum two per category. This will allow us to send prints to PSA in all five categories.

There is change in our program this year. We are used to having a Fall Show and a Spring Show every year. This time we will not have a Fall Show.

We will host Chris Dodd, a Canon Northern Explorer of Light on Friday, 22nd November. Details of his show will be available within a few weeks.

We have a new webmaster this year. Darryl Robertson agreed to take on the challenge and has already made several changes on our web page. The website with the changes Darryl made will represent us better and will help us promoting



# President's Message

our Guild around the world. Thank you Darryl!

As you already know, we have a PayPal account for the Guild. You will be able to pay your membership dues using PayPal. If you have not paid your dues yet, I encourage you to use this new method of payment. Just go to [www.photoguild.ns.ca/membership](http://www.photoguild.ns.ca/membership), select the membership type and click on "Pay Now". You will be able to use your credit card or debit card.

If you still prefer the traditional cash or cheque payments, we will be happy to accept it.

As in the past years, you can save money by purchasing services or products at the following stores and asking for the Photo Guild discount: Henry's; Carsand Mosher; Atlantic Photo Supply and National Art.

Whether you are an experienced member or have just joined, and you have a question about our processes or competitions, please do not hesitate to ask one of us. We will be happy to answer all your questions. You can also e-mail to us or give us a call at any time and we'll be happy to discuss your questions.

Our club would not work without volunteers. I would like to ask you to help us making the club one of the best. This would not only help our team but it gets you involved and result a more enjoyable Guild experience for yourself.

As you can see from our program, you'll have plenty of opportunities to use your camera on many of our field trips or workshops. So if you were busy at work this last summer, grab your camera and join us to shoot together and share our experience.

The very first field trip will be on Sunday at 1:00 pm at the Dingle Tower. Bring your camera, flash, reflector, tripod and be ready for a wonderful afternoon with live models. The second Field Trip will be a Macro Photography afternoon in the gardens around our home. I hope to see you there.

Happy shooting,  
Laszlo Podor  
President

# PSA Report

By Viki Gaul



News for participants in PSA Interclub Competitions.

The Photo Guild of Nova Scotia is a PSA Club, (Member in good standing with the Photographic Society of America). As such we participate in Interclub competitions with the highest scoring images from our 'inhouse' PSA competitions. These top images are sent away to compete against images from many clubs in many countries. It is a great opportunity to see how our images stand against the works of other clubs. As you can see from this latest result, we do very well in many categories!

The following is a list of ribbons that I have received since the last Guild meeting. They will be awarded as soon as possible this season.

In the meantime I thought it would be nice to share this news with the Membership. Our winners are listed below. Please join me in congratulating them. Notice, in particular, that we have first place images in two categories!

Viki Gaul, PSA Club Rep

Honorable Mention in Photojournalism, Mona Ghiz for Good Catch

1st place in Large Colour Print, Nick Honig for White Crowned Night Heron

Honorable Mention in Large Colour Print, Viki Gaul for Colourful Seaweeds

2nd place in Photojournalism, Mervyn Kumar-Misir for Surfing Nova Scotia

1st place in Photojournalism, Mona Ghiz for Positioning to dig the Volleyball

Honorable Mention in Photojournalism, Keith Vaughan for Silver Medal High Jump



Congratulations Mona! Here is the image that won 1st place in PSA Interclub PJ, Round 3.

ENTERING COMPETITIONS: A new document with step-by-step instructions for entering Guild Competitions is available for reading and/or downloading from the PGNS website, at [www.photoguild.ns.ca](http://www.photoguild.ns.ca)

The new step-by-step instruction document is full of screen shots taking you through the entry process. The purpose of the guide is to help make you as familiar with the entry process as possible, and to encourage your participation in Guild competitions. This is your guide for sizing and uploading images for the 2013-14 season.

The document is located on the right hand side of the HOME page. Click "Entering Competitions".

You are encouraged to save the document to your computer to use as a handy reference.

Contributions to this new document were made by Esther Theriault, Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Peter Steeper, George Mitchell, Darryl Robertson, Joyce Chew and Viki Gaul.

If for any reason you require clarification on any of the information, please get in touch with me or with a member of the executive.

Note: The [Bluebook](#) still has the old set of guidelines and will be updated soon.

Viki Gaul, PSA Club Rep.



# CAPA News

By Joyce Chew

Hello All,

I hope you all got out to enjoy the summer and shoot. Many of us attended the Canadian Camera Conference (CCC2013) hosted by Photo Fredericton. Michiko Nishijima and her team of Photo Fredericton volunteers ran the bilingual conference like a well-oiled machine. It was a wonderful occasion to immerse oneself in everything photographic and to learn from photographers all over North America. One of my highlights was the field trip to Shamper's Bluff. The next conference will be in Vancouver so make sure to pencil in July 31-August 2, 2015 on your calendars!

Please remember, in order to encourage new images, CAPA requires that the image to have been captured within 24 months of the CAPA competition closing date. For example, for the Fall 2013 competition, images should have been shot after Oct 29, 2011.

CAPA's definition for the OPEN category also applies to the Print and Theme categories. This year's CAPA Digital Interclub Theme is "**Humorous**". In the OPEN category **composites are not allowed**. The photographer can make enhancements in the camera (zooms, pans, multiple exposures, blurs, cropping) as well as modifications and enhancements using digital imaging software (HDR, focus-stacking, selective layering – using photographs of the same scene) to improve the overall presentation of the original captured image e.g., improved contrast/tonality, enhanced colour. Non-photographic components such as text,

lightning or computer-simulated imagery (which were not part of the original photograph) are not acceptable.

Please keep close track of your entries. An image that has been accepted to "**go away**" to a CAPA interclub competition **may not be entered in another CAPA competition** concurrently or in another competition year. For example, an image that has gone away to represent the club in Nature cannot be entered in the Print Division and *vice versa*.

More information on CAPA can be found on its website ([capacanada.ca](http://capacanada.ca)), including the benefits of individual membership. There are discounts for popular software like TOPAZ Labs, Proshow Gold and Producer and BLURB publishing as well as the opportunity to join digital imaging and print circuits for critiques. Another benefit is the Annual Digital Competition for Individual and Family members. Once again there are two challenging themes, "**Artistic Portrait**" or "**Organic Architecture**", which must be submitted by September 30, 2013. More information on conditions of entry and great prizes from the sponsors like ADOBE, Lowepro, Epson, Blurb and Sony can be found at:

<http://capacanada.ca/wp-content/assets/CAPA-2013-Annual-Digital-Competition-Rules-and-Guidelines.pdf>

If you have any questions about joining CAPA please do not hesitate to email me.

Looking forward to a great year of wonderful images!



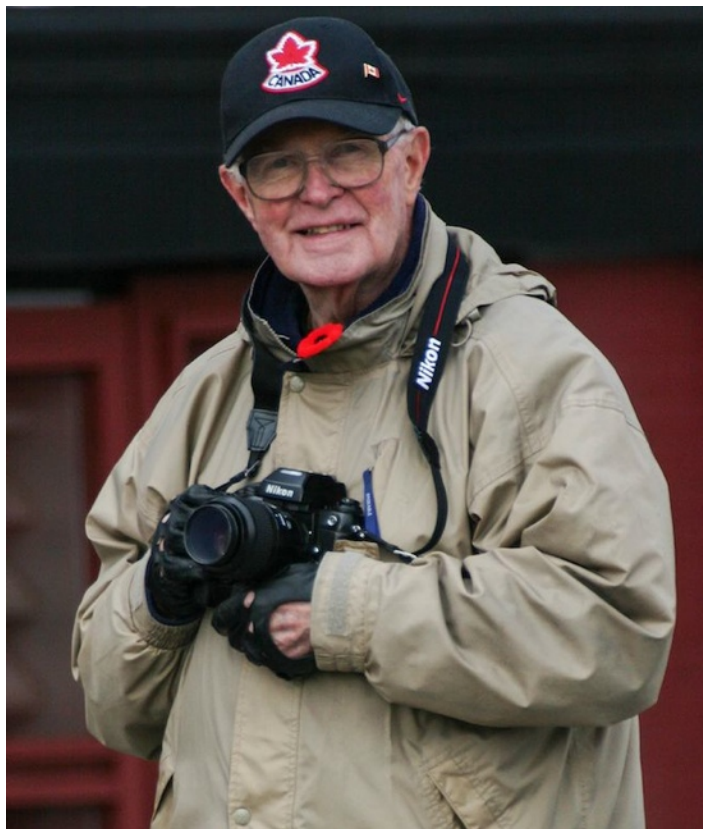
# CAPA News



Some of our attendees at the CAPA Conference (CCC2013) in Fredericton (images by Keith Vaughan).



# In Memoriam



It is with great sadness that we announce that the longest serving member of our club, Fred Joyce, passed away August 24, 2013 at the Admiral Long term care facility. A memorial service was held on Tuesday, August 27, 2013.

Born in Chatham, Ontario on November 1, 1925, Fred Joyce served in the Medical Branch of the Royal Canadian Navy in Halifax for over twenty years. He also worked for the Provincial Government in the Clinical Chemistry Division of the Pathology Institute in Halifax before retiring in 1986. In the early 1950s, Fred joined the Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia (then the Colour

Photographic Guild of the Maritimes). Always an active volunteer, he served on numerous committees such as Slide Chair, PSA rep, many Halifax Internationals and a term as President in 1960-61. An accomplished nature and portrait photographer, Fred donated the Fred Joyce Portraiture Trophy which is awarded for the best portrait in the Annual Trophy competition.

Fred always took the time to make new members feel welcome and to encourage their photographic aspirations. Those that shot slide film will remember with great fondness the home evaluation group sessions that he and his wife (the late Betty Joyce) hosted at their home. One could always tell when one of Fred's images appeared on the screen for evaluation as he would quip "I don't know who shot this, but it's absolutely GORGEOUS!".

Thanks for sharing all your wonderful images with us Fred.



# 2012-13 AWARDS BANQUET



# 2012-13 Trophies and Awards

## **Reid Sweet Trophy**

Best Image in the Pictorial Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**, Female Cardinal

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Viki Gaul**, Pair of Silverbacks

## **Tim Randall Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Pictorial

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**

Trophy and Silver Medal

**Marian Boyer**

## **Peter Herschorn Trophy**

Best Seascape/Landscape Image in Pictorial

Trophy and Pewter Medal

**Viki Gaul**, Mid September Maroon Bells

## **Camera Shop Trophy**

Best Image in the Nature Category

2nd place Certificate

**Joyce Chew**, C. Arietinum Visitor

Trophy and Bronze Medal,

**Viki Gaul**, Jack in the Pulpit

## **Cyril Smith Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Nature Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**

Trophy and Silver Medal

**George Mitchell**

## **Robert Thorpe Memorial Trophy**

Best Botanical Image in the Nature Category

Trophy and Pewter Medal

**Viki Gaul**, Jack in the Pulpit

## **Mary Primrose Memorial Trophy**

Best Wildflower Image in the Nature Category

Trophy and Pewter Medal

**Joyce Chew**, Pink Lady Slipper Trio

## **Abbott's Trophy**

Best Image in the Creative Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Ken Renton**, Motorbike Madness

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Viki Gaul**, Curiosity in Suspension

## **Gilbert Van Ryckevorsel Trophy**

Highest Cumulative points in the Creative Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Viki Gaul**

Trophy and Silver Medal

**Joyce Chew**

## **Mayor of HRM Trophy**

Theme: Parks of HRM

Trophy

**Joyce Chew**, George's Island Sail Past



# 2012-13 Trophies and Awards

## **Michael Walsh Trophy**

Best Image in the Photo Travel Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Tanya Elson**, Kasbah Ruin

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Ken Renton**, Saharan Sunset

## **Barb and Paul Bingham Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Photo Travel

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Sean Kelly**

## **Atlantic Photo Trophy**

Best Image in the Photojournalism Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**, Kayaker

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Tanya Elson**, Portugal Cup Cross Country

## **George Ghiz Sports Action Trophy**

Best Peak Action Image in Photojournalism

2nd Place Certificate

**Marian Boyer**, Three is a Crowd

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Joyce Chew**, Venezuela Dives for Ball

## **Keith Vaughan Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Photojournalism

2nd Place Certificate

**Mona Ghiz**

Trophy and Silver Medal

**Joyce Chew**

## **Frederick Joyce Trophy**

Best Images in the Portrait Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Joanna Satel**, Harrison

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Sean Kelly**, Trench Town Rasta

## **Betty Orchard Memorial Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Portrait Category

2nd Place certificate

**Mervyn Kumar-Misir**

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Sean Kelly**

## **Sam Yanofsky Trophy**

Best Image in the Humour Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Esther Thériault**, From Blonds to Blue Hair

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Mona Ghiz**, I am Choking

## **Betty and Ken Fraser Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Humour

2nd Place Certificate

**Mona Ghiz**

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Mervyn Kumar-Misir**

## **Markus Stasiulis Trophy**

Highest Points in the Silent Essay

2nd Place Certificate

**Jen Fried**, In Flight

Trophy and Silver Medal

**George Mitchell**, Insects and Flowers

# 2012-13 Trophies and Awards

## **Frederick Greene Trophy**

Highest Points in the Sight and Sound Essay

2nd Place Certificate

**Teunis Obdam**, Ghost Town Winds

Trophy and Silver Medal

**Viki Gaul**, Nova Scotia Treasures

## **Doris and Laurie Hancock Trophy**

Best Image in the Print Category

2nd Place Certificate

**Ken Renton**, Waiting in Havana

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Darryl Robertson**, Two Goldfinch

## **Carsand Mosher Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Print Competitions

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**

Trophy and Silver Medal

**Viki Gaul**

## **John William Webb Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in Slides

3rd Place certificate

**Eugene Mio**

2nd Place Certificate

**Joyce Chew**

Trophy and Pewter Medal

**Keith Vaughan**

## **Mervyn Kumar-Misir Trophy**

Highest Cumulative Points in CAPA Theme/  
Guild Assignment Competitions

2nd Place Certificate

**Mervyn Kumar-Misir**

Trophy and Pewter Medal

**Joyce Chew**

## **CAPA Award**

Highest Cumulative Points in CAPA digital and  
Print Competitions

2nd Place Certificate

**Viki Gaul**

CAPA Medal of Excellence in Photography  
and Pewter Medal

**Nick Honig**

## **Gordon R. Lay Trophy**

Highest Points for the Guild in External  
CAPA and PSA Competitions

**Not awarded due to delay in scoring.**

## **Robert K. Mann Trophy**

Highest Points in Competition Whose Theme  
was Chosen by R. K. Mann

2nd Place Certificate

**Marian Boyer**

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Joyce Chew**

## **Nova Scotia Bird Society Trophy**

Trophy and Bronze Medal

**Nick Honig**, Swamp Sparrow

# 2012-13 Trophies and Awards

## **Atlantic Geoscience Society Trophy**

Trophy and Bronze Medal  
**Esther Thériault**, Montmorency Falls Area

## **Last Billion Years Trophy**

Trophy and Pewter Medal  
**Darryl Robertson**, Glacial Striations

## **Schooner Cove Trophy**

Highest aggregate for "Guild Only" Competitions

2nd Place Certificate

**Nick Honig**

Trophy and Pewter Medal  
**Viki Gaul**

## **Reta Cook Trophy**

Best Image of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust  
Competition

Trophy and Bronze Medal  
**Darryl Robertson**, Cold Redpoll



## **Distinction Award Certificates**

Cumulative Points Collected in Guild Competitions

Novice (100 points)

**Darryl Robertson, Tuma Young**

Bronze (200 points)

**Sean Kelly**

Silver (300 points)

**Joseph Szostak, Mona Ghiz**



## **Distinction Award Certificates**

Cumulative Points Collected in Guild Competitions

Gold (500 points)

**Clive Elson, George Mitchell, John Wm. Webb, Mervyn Kumar-Misir, Nick Honig, Tanya Elson, Teunis Obdam**

Platinum (750 points)

**Joyce Chew, Viki Gaul**

Diamond (1,000 points)

**Ken Renton**

# 2012-13 Trophies and Awards

## **Gerald Shea Memorial Trophy (Novice Photographer of the Year)**

2nd Place Certificate  
**Jennifer Raven**

Trophy and Silver Medal  
**Darryl Robertson**

## **Guild Volunteer of the Year Award**

Pewter Medal  
**Mervyn Kumar-Misir**

## **CAPA Volunteer Medal**

Pewter Medal  
**Peter Steeper**



## **Cameraland Trophy (Photographer of the Year)**

The Highest Cumulative Points for the Top 75 Images

5th Place Certificate  
**George Mitchell**

4th Place Pewter Medal  
**Mervyn Kumar-Misir**

3rd Place Bronze Medal  
**Joyce Chew**

2nd Place Silver Medal  
**Nick Honig**

Cameraland Wambolt-Waterfield Trophy and Gold Medal  
**Viki Gaul**



# 2012-13 Award Presentations





# 2012-13 Award Presentations





# 2012-13 Award Presentations





# 2012-13 Award Presentations





# 2012-13 Best Images: Pictorial



1st Place  
Pair of Silverbacks  
**Viki Gaul**



2nd Place: Female Cardinal, **Nick Honig**

# 2012-13 Best Images: Nature



1st Place  
Jack in the Pulpit  
**Viki Gaul**



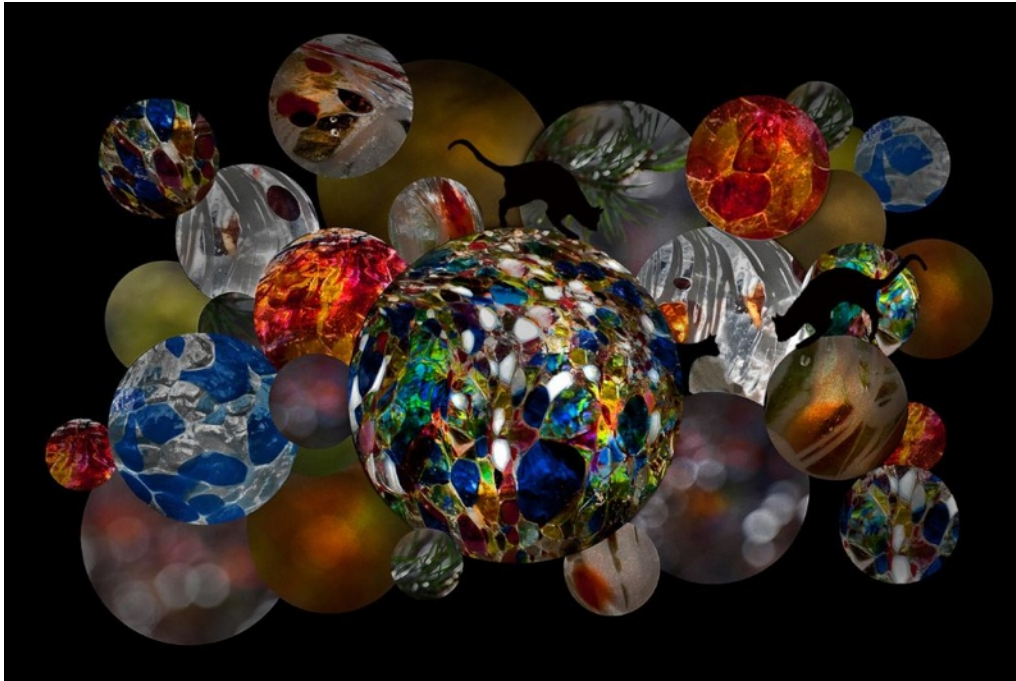
2nd Place: C. Arietinum Visitor, **Joyce Chew**



Best Wildflower Image: Pink Ladyslipper Trio,  
**Joyce Chew**



# 2012-13 Best Images: Creative



1st Place  
Curiosity in Suspension  
**Viki Gaul**



2nd Place  
Motorbike Madness  
**Ken Renton**

# 2012-13 Best Images: Photo Travel



1st Place: Saharan Sunset, **Ken Renton**

2nd Place  
Kasbah Ruin  
**Tanya Elson**





# 2012-13 Best Images Photojournalism



1st Place: Portugal Cup Cross Country, **Tanya Elson**



2nd Place: Kayaker, **Nick Honig**



# 2012-13 Best Images: Humour



1st Place

I am Choking

**Mona Ghiz**

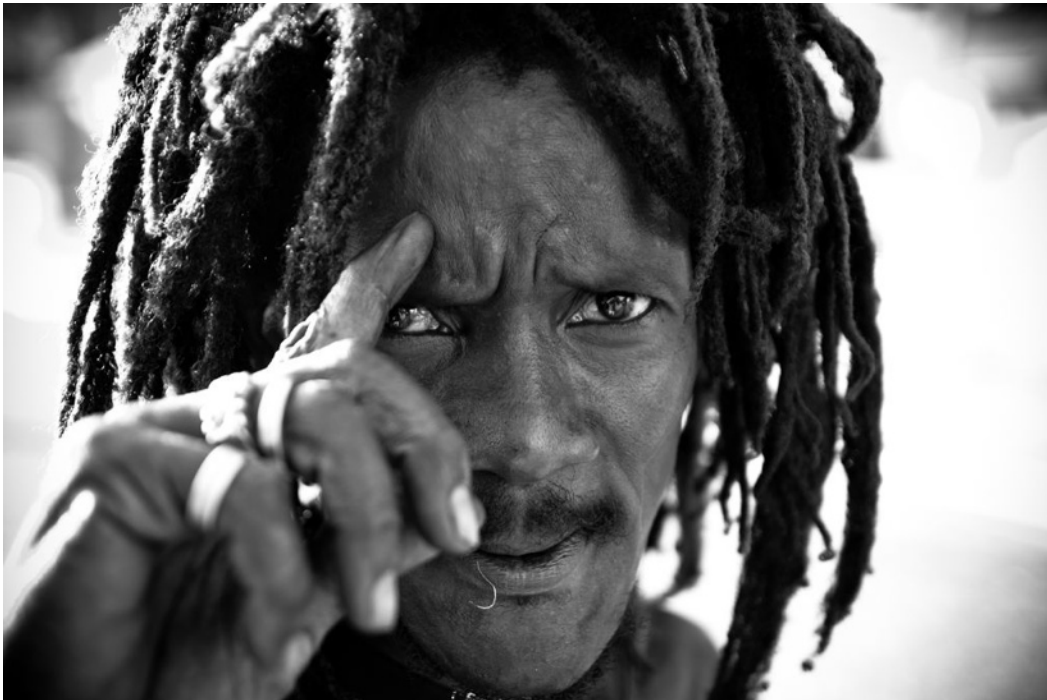


2nd Place

From Blonds to  
Blue Hair

**Esther Thériault**

# 2012-13 Best Images: Portrait



1st Place  
Trench Town  
Rasta  
**Sean Kelly**



2nd Place  
Harrison  
**Joanna Satel**



# 2012-13 Best Images: Various



Reta Cook Trophy: Cold Redpoll, **Darryl Robertson**



Shubie Wildlife Park Print: Arctic Fox Eyes, **Darryl Robertson**



Atlantic Geoscience Society Trophy: Montmorency Falls Area, **Esther Thériault**



Last Billion Years Trophy: Glacial Striations, **Darryl Robertson**



Nova Scotia Bird Society Trophy: Swamp Sparrow, **Nick Honig**

# 2012-13 Best Images: Various



1st Place, R. K. Mann Trophy  
Sandy Spill  
**Joyce Chew**

2nd Place, R. K. Mann Trophy  
Creepy Crawly  
**Marian Boyer**



Peter Herschorn Trophy  
Mid September Maroon Bells  
**Viki Gaul**



# 2012-13 Best Images: Various



1st Place, George Ghiz  
Sports Action Trophy

Venezuela Dives for Ball

Joyce Chew



2nd Place, George Ghiz Sports Action Trophy: Three is a Crowd, **Marian Boyer**



# Biding Time in Texas

By Jennifer Raven

I had dreamed of going nowhere more than rural East Texas for over a year. I had re-connected with an old friend I'd not seen in 20 years, back when we both lived overseas. Now both returned to this continent, we'd spent hours on the phone describing



our lives, our families, and our new surroundings: mine here by the Atlantic, hers in Diana, Texas. In July, I finally had the opportunity to visit my friend, and see her (red)neck of the woods.



I knew I had arrived in the South even as I deplaned at George Bush Intercontinental

Airport in Houston: my favourite country song by Carrie Underwood was playing as I awaited my connection to Tyler.

My experience of the South had thus far excluded Texas, having explored Tennessee and Mississippi 15 years

earlier, driving along Music Highway from Nashville to Memphis, and later to Gatlinburg, one of the strangest places I have ever



been: a cross between Niagara Falls and Las Vegas, without the Falls or casinos. After a warm reunion upon landing, the 60 minute drive out of Tyler helped reinforce my

# Biding Time in Texas

knowledge that I was not in Kansas (er, Nova Scotia) anymore. The signs were everywhere. Even the sign at the local feed



shop advertised, "Pet & Livestock Feeds, Animal Health, Lawn & Garden, Fertilizer, Wild Bird Seed, Garden Seed, Plants, Bag & Bulk Feed, Hay, Ammo."



In Diana, at the ranch, I could only glimpse and guess at the true nature of my surroundings, concealed under cover of darkness. My friend had often told me how much Up-

shur County reminds her of the bucolic beauty of the Galilee, where we had met and lived some twenty years earlier.

Under a hot Texas sun my first morning, I could see, (and at 40°C, not counting the humidex, feel), the resemblance, right outside my window. Situated on hundreds of acres of farmland, it was a lush sea of green. My first acquaintances were Hank and Hebou, two of the dogs who make the ranch their home, running and dashing across the yard and beyond the fence where a couple of horses stood gracefully in the shade.



"Why did the chickens cross the road?"

Next, a very cocky rooster who, as I discovered during my stay, makes the rounds throughout the day followed by a small harem of hens.

On a rural road, in the distance, horses and hay bales, and a picturesque lane leading deeper into the property. Not a lot of traffic, except for pick-up trucks and farming



# Biding Time in Texas

equipment, farm hands driving by sporadically.



Here, and on other ranches, we would see past meeting present, as aging pick-up trucks, trailers and other equipment sit side



by side with the latest in John Deere equipment and shiny new pick-up trucks.

During my stay I would search for evidence of cowboys and rednecks, and it

was not hard to come by. One of our first stops was Cavender's Boot City in Longview. More cowboy boots in every size and style than you can imagine, with the rich scent of leather permeating the store. I had promised my kids cowboy boots and cowboy hats; I left Cavender's



outfitted with 3 kids' sized cowboy hats and four pairs of boots: matching traditional black ones for my twins, pink rhinestone detailed boots for my daughter, and possibly the most gorgeous, hand detailed, pair of boots I have ever seen, for myself. A little bit of Cowboy Magic to bring home.

I was very aware of being in a country at war: every flight I took offered soldiers priority seating and free baggage checking; yellow ribbons were not as prominent as I remember during a US trip I took in 1991, during the first Gulf War, but there was a lot of support for the troops, a Wounded Warrior Alumni license plate holder, and the only Obama/Biden bumper sticker I spotted was on my friend's car.

# Biding Time in Texas

Being in the Bible Belt, there were churches of every stripe, including the Texas Cowboy Worship Centre - alas, no cowboys in sight.

We took long drives as my friend showed me around Diana, Longview and the back roads, exploring the dichotomy of rich and poor: huge, sprawling ranches alongside small, mobile homes and trailers in varying states of disrepair. Many looked abandoned or indeed uninhabitable, yet to my surprise we heard voices, radios playing, TVs on inside.



I was surprised when I saw my first oil derick - fenced off in the parking lot of one of the strip malls, quietly rising and falling on automatic pilot, a key, fitting piece of the constructed landscape, strange to me, but a common sight in this state.

I love the South, strange, foreign place that it is to me and my sensibilities. Politics in the Bible Belt are not my cup of Texas Tea, but make for an interesting backdrop, along with the kudzu. Memories of a Confederate pride and past are often in evidence, a re-

minder that Texas has a unique history amongst the States. There are more than a



few, who, like those who believe we will see the End Times, believe the South Will Rise Again.

As I wandered around these places with my camera, my friend stood back, warning me, "In Texas they'll shoot first and ask questions later!" Still, I was compelled by curiosity to poke around. I assumed a friendly



Canadian "Hello, how're you doing today?" with a smile would keep me out of trouble, but as it turned out, I never met a soul in my travels - although in some areas, out of



# Biding Time in Texas

respect, I took my shots discreetly from the car window.



I didn't know he was on the ballot...

I discovered more than one proudly displayed Old Glory flag, one in a graveyard, another in a souvenir shop doorway, another on the door of private car lot, where old American vehicles make up a cross between a junkyard and a garage frozen in time. Although not a car aficionado, I do like vintage cars, simply for the sense of another time they have about them. I love their distinctive shapes: curves, fins,

chrome, some still shiny despite the gathering rust.

This in stark contrast to the love Americans have of their cars: it seemed everywhere I went the cars were very new, clean, and in good repair, no matter whether in up-market or down-market neighbourhoods. This reminds me of a bumper sticker I saw in Mississippi: "I may be po', but I'm proud," - on the back of a Cadillac.

And of course there were SUVs and pickups larger than any I ever see in Nova Scotia. But in this man's yard, it was an antique vehicle graveyard, with at least a dozen or more old cars decaying in the heat and humidity, tires melting right into the ground, fusing with the landscape.



I once went on a date with a Texas native, many, many years ago. I'll never forget him saying, "I'm not American; I'm from Texas!" Southern and Texan pride are powerful things, a form of state pride I'm sure not encountered in all of the other forty-nine, and definitely not something I've encountered in our own country's provinces.

# Biding Time in Texas

National pride in the US of A takes on a whole other character, and in Texas it seems



to reach to another order of magnitude.

My stay this time was short; I could have happily lingered for weeks, just biding time under those beautiful Texas skies. I told my friend if one of the rental properties on the ranch came up for rent to let me know, as it would be a dream to spend a month or two down on the ranch, watching the kids play in the fields in the Texas sunshine, writing, reading, and exploring more of the back roads. It looks like I'll be heading back soon - this time to San Antonio and the Alamo. I am falling a little in love with the Lone Star State as my fascination with the South grows.

*See y'all*



