

## What is PSA? – (Maybe you'd like to join!)

By Marilyn and Rick Cloran, FPSA's, MPSA's, MNEC's

PSA is the national organization that provides a framework and structure to amateur photography. The Society has individual, club, and council or chapter level memberships. The New England Camera Club Council (NECCC) is a member council. More importantly, many of our fellow camera club members are individual members of PSA in addition to being members of their club.

PSA membership brings a number of benefits including the PSA Journal. The Journal has a variety of articles each month including how to's, travel info, digital tips, recognition of photographic achievement, and much more. Newer members often find the Study Groups available in many different areas including: pictorial images (representing the combination of the old Color Projected Image and Electronic Image Divisions), nature images, portraiture, and prints, to be very beneficial in expanding their skills and learning how to evaluate their own and other peoples work. A growing number of these study groups are available on-line. You may also have heard of the special opportunities, such as the portrait competitions for individuals or the creative competitions for individuals that are available to PSA members for no charge.

There is a special section of the PSA web site dedicated to member photography education. The majority of these courses are free to PSA members. They cover everything from basic composition and photographic techniques to a full course with certification on image evaluation (judging). On the PSA home page click on the Education tab or use this link <http://www.psa-photo.org/index.php?sn-education>. The section is intended to help members improve their photographic skills from capture to image evaluation to get the most out of their membership. As we noted above, most of these resources on the page are free to PSA members, so have a look.

PSA also serves as a governing body providing structure to the international exhibitions that are held within the US and around the world. The Ocean State International is recognized by PSA for its adherence to these rules and for its efficient management. You may have heard the words "star ratings" with an introduction of a judge or presenter. These ratings are very similar to bridge or chess masters points and represent the cumulative level of acceptances that the person has gathered in PSA recognized international exhibitions. These ratings are only available to PSA members.

Finally, you may hear or see presenters introduced as APSA, FPSA, HonPSA, HonFPSA, PPSA, EPSA, MPSA or GMPSA. The APSA (Associate of the Photographic Society of America), FPSA (Fellow of the Photographic Society of America), HonPSA (Honorary Member of PSA), and HonFPSA (Honorary Fellow of PSA) **honors** are conferred on individual members for their work on behalf of the Society, local and regional photographic organizations and their contributions to furthering the understanding and appreciation of photography. We are talking years and in some cases decades of work here. Several of our council officers carry these honors. In particular, you should know that only 124 HonPSA's have been conferred since 1940. **There are only 27 living HonPSA's and only four of those live in New England. All four are members of the NECCC Board of Directors!** Dan Charbonnet, HonPSA, EPSA, MNEC, John Fuller, HonPSA, HonNEC, Susan Mosser, HonPSA, HonNEC, and Jacob Mosser, HonPSA, EPSA, HonNEC are the four officers.

The PPSA (Proficiency in Photography), EPSA (Excellence in Photography), MPSA (Master of Photography), and GMPSA (Grand Master of Photography) **distinctions** are conferred based on the individual's accumulated record in international exhibitions in multiple areas, e.g., Pictorial, Nature, Photojournalism, or Photo-Travel projected images or monochrome or color prints. There are also specialty areas such as 3D (stereo) projected images and videos. It often requires years of successful participation in international exhibitions to achieve the star rating required to apply for these distinctions.

One more feature of PSA is the annual Conference that is held in a different location each year. Like the annual NECCC Conference in Amherst, the PSA Conference is a wonderful way to make new friends, meet old friends, and share and learn more about photography. Be sure to check out the PSA web site at [www.PSA-photo.org](http://www.PSA-photo.org)