

# Youth Showcase Handled Successfully

Motivated by a sincere desire to foster photography among the youth of Ocean and Monmouth Counties, NJ, and combined with a pressing need to revive their faltering club membership, the board of the Ocean Camera Club (OCC) made a decision to conduct a high school student contest and sponsor winners to the Photography Society of America (PSA) Youth Showcase.

Dana Cohoon, Earle Stevens and Elena McTighe formed a committee. The first goal was to get the word out. They took a two-pronged approach: Dana wrote to the local high schools in the area and Elena sent numerous notices to the media outlets. The first year, the club had encouraging success with 117 students entering 341 photographs from fourteen high schools. Twenty-six pictures were sponsored to the PSA Youth Showcase and the club expanded by five new members as a result of the publicity. One student photographer joined the PSA.

The second year the committee hit the proverbial jackpot. The committee applied for and received a \$1000 matching grant from the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Private donations made up the matching money. Part of the money was used to fund a contest web site, which had over one thousand visitors between February and May. The web site was linked to the PSA and the Ocean Camera Club web sites. The competition also received the support of the OCC's sponsor, the Lakewood (NJ)

Community School administration, which waived the cost of opening the school for the Saturday judging.

Two high schools invited the committee members to speak before their students and over three hundred students received instructions on photography and the contest requirements. Two of the local town newspapers became enthusiastic proponents of the contest and wrote feature articles, which focused on the previous winners and the 2006 local and national contests. Posters were placed in libraries and business establishments. As a result, 950 photos were received from 224 four students representing twenty-one high schools. Seventy-six pictures were sponsored to the PSA contest, eighteen new members joined the club and four new members joined the PSA

All entries were mailed to Dana Cohoon who logged them in and separated the pictures into their categories of architecture, human interest, landscape/waterscape, photographer's choice, and photojournalism. On the day of the judging three tables were set up and three teams of three judges each evaluated the pictures from 9 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Students and the public were invited to attend at 11 a.m. and the students were given the opportunity to meet with the judges and receive personal evaluations on their pictures. Awards were given for first, second and third place in each category and the winning photos were placed on the student contest web site. A *Best in Show* was chosen, and that student received a plaque at the camera club's banquet in June.

Elena McTighe  
Sea Girt,  
New Jersey

Photos © Tom Garvey

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The Best in Show photo London Twilight by Abby Rix is held by Dana Cohoon, Co-Director of the Ocean Camera Club's photo contest. Abby's photo also won Honorable Mention in Architecture for PSA Youth Showcase.



Elena McTighe, student and student's mother inspect a photograph.

# in New Jersey

Following the judging, pictures were selected to be sent to the PSA Youth Showcase. According to the contest rules, the club was permitted to send one picture from each high school in all of the categories except *Photographer's Choice* where two pictures were allowed. All of the winning photographs and the PSA choices were scanned. A CD/ DVD slide show was created which will be offered to the high schools in preparation for the 2007 contest. In addition, in September 2006, the Ocean Camera Club will hold its first Student Fotofest. Students, teachers, parents and the general public will be invited and the slide show will be shown at that time.

The student photographer and winner of the local *Best in Show* wrote, "Thank you so much! I can't express what an honor it is to have won this award!"

The timing for the contest was as follows. The OCC starts their campaign in the early fall, by writing to teachers and sending notices to the newspapers. They have found that the small town publications are the most cooperative. The newspaper notices are important because they are the only way to inform students who are home schooled or go to out of area private schools. In January the notices were repeated with more substantial information offered. Posters were distributed in January. School visits were made in December and January. In February, the club created the student photo contest web site and the rules and application were posted there. The



Judge Marion Wendt meets with students Rebecca Furman (left) and Brittany Birchier (right), from Jackson Memorial High School



local student contest was held in early April and photographs were sent to the PSA by their deadline in early May.

Teachers and students have enthusiastically received the contest. Photojournalism teacher, Andi Mulshine, from the Communications High School in Wall Township, NJ wrote, "Kudos to the Ocean Camera Club for offering this competition to our students. It's so valuable to see how well one's work holds up against that of other high school students. You've given us the means to do that."

*Ocean Camera Club President Earle Stevens meets with Ali Marmberg and her parents Corrine and Glen. Ali went on to win PSA Youth Showcase Most Outstanding Picture and the Brian Michael Goldberg Award with her photo Last Door*

Entry forms for the 2007 PSA Youth Showcase program are available from Kathleen Z. Braun, APSA, Chapters Special Projects Youth Group Advisor, 300 Lake Shore Rd, Grafton, WI, 53024 email: Pkzbraun@aol.com

To view Youth Showcase winners please visit <http://www.psa-photo.org/yuth0201.htm>



Judges from left: Howard Wichansky; Sal Tozzi; and Marion Wendt