



Distinctive Image

featuring...

Larry Cowles, APSA, EPSA

Norco, California

Once again the *Journal* continues its *Distinctive Image* series and featured this time is a Photographic Society of America (PSA) artist who has achieved photographic distinction, who has an exemplary exhibition record, and whose work can serve as a model and inspiration to other members. Yes, such a photographer is **Larry Cowles, APSA, EPSA**. One look at the May 2007 *PSA Journal's Who's Who* listing will reveal that Larry is among the Tops in Color Projected Images (CPID), Nature Slides, and Small Color Prints. He has mastered pet photography, glassware and tabletop photography, insect and wildflower images and yet, when asked to choose his favorite subject for this feature, Larry did not hesitate to choose

Portraiture: both studio type and outdoor portraits. Mention Larry Cowles name, and most PSA Members will think "Portraits."

An avid exhibitor, Larry has earned a Galaxy 7 in Color Slide Division (now Color Projected Image Division), a Diamond Star in Nature, 4 Stars in Travel, 2 in Photojournalism, and 3 Stars in Small Color Prints. His consummate exhibition record has earned him the Excellency distinction (EPSA) in PSA in 2005. Besides his PSA letters, the *Federation Internationale de L'arte Photographique* and the *Southern California Council of Camera Clubs (S4C)* have recognized Larry with their distinctions, AFIAP and DFS4C respectively.



Julie looking up

In addition to his outstanding photographic list of achievements, Larry Cowles also has an exemplary 20-year service record in PSA. He has been Chairman of CPID's *Tops in Photography*; First Vice Chairman *CPID*; *Information Center Chairman* and currently serves as Director for the *CPID Dual Projection International Individual Creative Competition*. He is a candidate for Chairman of CPID and if elected will take office in September 2008. For his services to the Society, Larry was elected as an Associate in 2005.

In addition to all of his PSA-service related responsibilities, Larry is a member of the S4C Board of Directors (BOD); President Glendora Camera Club, Treasurer Pomona Camera Club; BOD member PSA Roundup Chapter; Chairman Color Slide Division S4C Exhibition 2002-2006; Chairman Photo Travel Division Golden West Exhibition 2003-2007 and a member of the Redlands Camera Club and the Circle of Confusion Camera Club. WHEW!

And somehow, Larry finds time to go to work. He earned an Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Arizona and is currently an Applications Engineer for Weidmuller, Inc. a manufacturer of connectors and electronics for the automation industry. Previously, Larry worked in the Photo Processing Industry for ten years as a Marketing/Sales Manager. In this capacity he trained many store sales personnel in photography and has used this experience over the years to impart knowledge to others.

When asked about his photographic background, Larry stated, "As a child, I was never artistic. I had trouble drawing stick figures. After



Chef Bill blue frame



Mary Ann attitude

my parents gave me a Brownie Hawkeye camera, I started taking pictures. I loved shooting but never saw myself as a photographer. It was later while in the Air Force, that a friend took me to the base darkroom and taught me how to develop black and white negatives. I was hooked.

Over a span of 40 years, I have taken pictures of almost everything. Because of life's demands, I find myself taking pictures mostly within 50 miles of my home and most of my competition entries consist of images I created in my own home or backyard. This has led to many images of still life, glassware, insects, small animals, etc. In recent years, my interest has been people photography, both indoor and outdoor. I find a love for studio type photography because I can control so many of the elements of the image. Lighting is everything in photography and with a studio I am "master of the light."



Rikki with pearls



Mika black hat

Photos © Larry Cowles, APSA, EPSA

ARTIST'S STATEMENT



Photography is capturing a "moment in time" that possibly no one else but me can see at that instant. I can be standing in position with 20 photographers but my "moment in time" will be different from all the others. How well one does this capture is an ongoing lesson in the art of seeing. While some have a natural talent that allows them to magically point the camera and capture the most amazing photographs with little thought to the technical process, others like me look to technique, past experience and education in capturing the image. I find a love for studio type photography because I can control so many of the elements of the picture. Lighting is everything in photography and with a studio I am master of the light.

It is hard to describe the joy I feel when I am able to compose and light a portrait that the subject feels good about. I think it is the immediate feedback from the subject that you can never get from other types of photography that makes all the work worthwhile.

TECHNIQUE

Because he is always on the lookout for interesting and photogenic subjects, the people Larry photographs come from many sources: they may be neighbors, people from work or strangers approached in the supermarket. Over the years he has made contact with a local modeling agency and a dance school, both of which refer models, and he even uses online websites, whose purpose is to bring together amateur models and photographers

Larry Cowles studio is a converted den that measures 18 x 20 feet with black cloth covering the windows to block out external light and plywood sheets placed over the carpet to provide a hard surface to stand on. Painted muslin backdrops or rolls of background paper drape down over the plywood to give a cove type effect. Everything is carefully planned and nothing is left to chance.

For a simple lighting technique that gives a pleasing effect, Larry uses moonlights, which are electronic studio strobe lights. A large 3 x 3 foot soft box acts as the primary light source and is placed 10 to 90 degrees to the side of the camera position, depending on the effect desired. Most work is done with the light from 20-45 degrees of the camera, which produces a very agreeable light on the face without harsh shadows. Just to the right of the subject, a large white reflector card is used as a fill light. The main light is set for f8 with the reflected fill light from the card set at f5.6 using ISO 100. Two hair lights, behind and to each side, are used to give separation between the subject and the background and these hair lights are placed high and have a snoot to control the light so that it only illuminates the hair. Called "Y-lighting" it was used in the early Hollywood days and this set-up will work for film or digital cameras. Since going all digital-capture, Larry utilizes the camera's histogram and adjusts the settings for slight variations in light, skin color or brightness of clothing.



Amy fur hat



Little girl in chair



Chemist Jim



Jacqueline blue dress



Jackie in dots

*Julie hat
looking up*

