

The PSA Journal's History Series

Celebrating 75 Years of PSA

Dedicated to the memory of longtime
PSA Historian, Tony Patti, Hon PSA, FPSA

The Divisions

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At the Convention of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) in 1938 the PSA by-laws were revised to provide for separate special interest divisions, and this established the framework for the organizational structure that has remained until today. The story of PSA's divisions really reflects the history of photography. Below is a list of PSA divisions and the dates of their initial formation:

<i>Pictorial (now pictorial print)</i>	1939
<i>Historical</i>	1939
<i>Nature</i>	1940
<i>Technical (later Techniques)</i>	1941
<i>Color (then Color Slide Division, CSD, now Color Projected Image Division, CPID)</i>	1941
<i>Camera Club</i>	1943
<i>Photojournalism</i>	1944
<i>Motion Picture</i>	1946
<i>Stereo</i>	1952
<i>Photo Travel</i>	1969
<i>Electronic Imaging</i>	1997

To create a division 100 PSA members have to express an interest and sign a petition for formation.

1977 Judging a Color
Print Contest for the
Pictorial Print Division.
Left - Silom Horwitz, FPSA;
Middle - Ollie Fife, FPSA;
Right - Charles Keaton,
FPSA; Standing - Manuel
Hernandez. Contributed by
Manuel Hernandez.



This article will address some of the important developments within each of the divisions.

Pictorial Division. The formation of the Pictorial Division set the pattern for most of those to follow. **John P. Mudd, APSA**, was the first chairman, and the division was about black and white prints. One of the first salons was at the New York World's Fair in 1940; another that year was displayed at the Cleveland Art Museum for a month. In 1941 "In the Image of America" was hung at the New York Museum of Science and Industry in cooperation with the Farm Security Administration. By 1946 there were 63 approved print exhibitions, and the division was the first to begin a star rating system to recognize achievement in salons.

In 1952 the Pictorial *Who's Who* listed 74 salons including exhibitors from the United States, Canada, and 40 other countries. In 1964 color prints were transferred from the Color Division to the Pictorial Division, and the name became the Pictorial Print Division (PPD). Several early study groups have endured until today, including the Green Eagle, American, Canadian, European, and Portrait groups. The "Print of the Month" activity began in the late 1940s, and it was first a society activity. Now the division manages the activity, and over the years there have been 13 directors.

Historical Division. **A.J. Olimsted** (later, FPSA) was the first chair of this division. Its aim was to collect data and memorabilia on the beginnings of photography creating a complete history of the art and science and also of PSA. The division was discontinued eight years later in 1947, and each division was charged with keeping its own history.

Nature Division. This division was established in 1940 with **Tappan Gregory** as its first chairman. The first nature print salon occurred in 1941. Originally domestic animals were included as subject matter but by 1947, the *PSA Journal* nature editor announced, "the part of nature which man has brought under his domination is no longer considered nature."

A nature print competition for individuals



1962 Nature Division. Contributed by Herb Gustafson, FPSA, PPSA

was begun in 1945 by the Nature Camera Club of Chicago and lasted through 1970. Beginning in March 1948 and through 1975 the division administered four-color nature competitions per year with three levels of competition. In 1952 slide circuit study groups were initiated. Specific nature topics such as wildflowers, birds, or insects were popular. One wildflower group closed in 2006 after 96 rounds! **Wade Clutton, FPSA, EPSA**, indicates that one of the important landmarks in the division was the beginning of the concept of *The Nature Story* introduced by **Charles Summers, APSA**. The division has long provided identification service to help with technical names for nature subjects, one-on-one individual evaluation, instructional print and slide sets, and nature essay workshops that emphasize a complete nature story.

Technical (Techniques) Division. The initial technical division began in 1941 and brought together researchers from companies such as Eastman Kodak, Bausch and Lomb, The Haloid Company, Agfa Ansco, and General Electric's Mazda division. The division established local sections in Binghamton, Cleveland, and Rochester. Members in this division published articles in the *PSA Journal* that set the standards for reporting scientific developments in photographic chemistry and equipment.

Beginning in 1950 the division published *Photographic Science and Technique* a quarterly supplement to the *PSA Journal*, which began to suggest the difference between the professional aims of the Technical Division and the non-professional interests of the majority of the Society. In 1956 *The Society of Photographic*

Scientists and Engineers (SPSE) was formed. At that time the former Technical Division was restructured to be the Techniques Division. The division's aim was to serve all PSA members by providing programs and articles on techniques and a question and answering service. The Techniques Division functioned until the end of the 2002 Conference. **Sil Horwitz, FPSA**, was the last chairman.

Color Division. The Color Division began in 1941 and **Fennick G. Small** was the first chairman (1941-1943). The division was responsible for both color slides and prints. **H.J. Johnson, FPSA**, was chairman from 1943 to 1947, the period when most new services were initiated and eventually duplicated by the other divisions. Johnson first collected a set of exhibition slides with commentary to circulate among camera clubs. Then slide circuits for individuals began late in 1943; by 1949 these circuits were numerous and very successful. The first three slide circuits of ten members each included **Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt** and **Ansel Adams, FPSA**.

The first color all-slide salon occurred in 1943 and was carried out by the Chicago Color Camera Club. The club borrowed money to do the exhibition and earned a profit of \$12.15. There were 3000 entries. Following this the division began a national monthly slide competition for clubs. Division dues were established in 1944 at \$1.00 a year, and the policy was to spend the money as fast as it was received so those contributing would get the benefit. In February of 1944 Johnson began the National Color Slide Club Competition. This survives today as the highly successful International Club Image Competition. By 1945 members were joining the division in great numbers, and a *Who's Who* list was drawn from six exhibitions across the country. Eventually there was an International Slide Competition for Individuals (1946), Instructional Slide Sets for members (1947), and International Slide Set Exchanges. Johnson persuaded sponsors of black and white print exhibitions to add color slide sections to their shows, and he recommended the standards and procedures for slide exhibitions.

Star ratings were put into effect in 1952, and the permanent slide collection was begun the same year. That year there were 66 clubs in the club slide circuits, and the national club slide competition had 138 participating clubs. Color print makers were few compared to slide makers, but beginning in 1945 there were traveling color print sets, courses in color print making in Chicago, and a color print competition. By the 1960s all color print activities were transferred to the pictorial print division.

In the 1970s and 1980s people began to do creative things with photography and a new category

appeared in exhibitions called *contemporary*. The images were described as “stimulating the mind,” and many did not consider this real photography. The name was eventually changed to *creative* and the category defined as altered reality. Creative became a theme in exhibitions rather than a separate class. The division leadership at this time was not enamored with digital capture. However, eventually when the topical divisions separated digital and slide classes in their exhibitions, the Welsh Color Slide Division exhibition introduced “dual projection.” It took until 2006 for the division to vote unanimously to include both slide and digital work in its activities and change its name to the Color Projected Image Division (CPID). Now 80% of CPID exhibitions are dual projection.

Camera Club Division. Since PSA’s inception in 1934 camera clubs have been very important. It was decided in 1944 that there should be a Camera Club Division. **Cecil B. Atwater, FPSA**, was the division’s first chairperson. As the organizational structure of the society and its divisions developed, the division was made a standing committee of PSA rather than a division. This committee continues to publish camera club guides and provide services for affiliated camera clubs, club councils, and other associations. Today the Chapters, Clubs and Councils Vice President directs the committee.

Photojournalism Division. The division began in 1944 as the “Press Division” with the efforts of a stellar committee of newspaper photographers and editors. The first chairperson was **Robert M. Beer, APSA**, owner and publisher of the *Times-Gazette* in Ashland, Ohio. Emphasis shifted, in 1947, and the name was changed to Photo Journalism, as **Cliff Edom, APSA**, who had established a photojournalism program at the University of Missouri, became the division chairperson. The division’s purpose has been the *recording of current events or situations to preserve them for the future including news, features, man and man’s environment, and human interest*. Its goal has been to help photographers learn to capture events effectively whether family activities, historical happenings, or images for special publications. Pictures or sequences are to have informative content and emotional impact.

In 1954 the division established an award to recognize good photography in industrial publications. This award was the first of its kind and drew considerable attention. In 1957 the division established the *International Understanding through Photography Award (IUTP)*. This award has been made to such notables as Walt Disney, Gordon Parks, Ansel Adams, and Barry Goldwater. In 2004 the award became a society award, however it continues to be sponsored by the division.

The first photojournalism sections in exhibitions were begun in 1961, and accounting of acceptances

for star ratings and *Who’s Who* began in 1970. In 1972 the *Photojournalist of the Year* program was introduced, and the *Published Picture of the Year* program began in 1993. In 1976 the photo story competition began. By 2003 *human interest* became a theme section in many division exhibitions. The guideline is that human interest *depicts a person or persons in an interactive, emotional, or unusual situation (excluding sports action)*. It is noteworthy that all 40 plus living members of the division who have achieved five stars over the years were each awarded a commemorative plaque in 2008.

Motion Picture Division (MPD) Wanting to embrace all forms of photography the PSA Board of Directors approved a motion picture division in 1946. **Harris B. Tuttle, FPSA** founded the division, and he established a film trophy in his family’s name for the MPD annual competition. Later in 1954 the *Amateur Cinema League (ACL)*, which had been established in 1926, merged with the division bringing nearly 2500 members into PSA. ACL’s *Ten Best* film competition survived as the PSA International Film Festival, and its *Movie Makers* magazine was absorbed by the *PSA Journal* as the *Cine Section* in 1955.

Photo clubs tried to incorporate motion but still and motion photographers were not too interested in each other’s programs. PSA was fundamentally a still picture society. While the conventions were good for showing films, moviemakers could not send their work around in circuits. The division was discontinued and today the Electronic Imaging Division (EID) includes motion pictures.

Stereo Division. Around 1950 there was an upsurge of interest in three-dimensional photography, and stereo camera clubs were organized in cities. The first stereo activity was initiated within the Color Division in 1950, and in November of 1951 the PSA Board of Directors voted to have a separate division. In 1952 **Dr. Frank E. Rice** (later FPSA) led the formation of the division and he was its first chairman. The division had a bulletin from the beginning; the *Stereogram* existed from 1953 until 1970. From 1971 through 1978 there were quarterly supplements in the *PSA Journal* called Division News; these included a stereo supplement. In 1992 a division newsletter, *Dimensions Three*, returned and came out three times a year. The division has operated stereo circuits, personal slide evaluation, instructive programs, and individual competitions. In 1998 the division had over 500 members counting all who said stereo was a major interest.

Since 1991 exhibitions have included a stereo card section in their shows, and since the 1990s, there has been an increasing application of electronic imaging techniques to slides and to cards. Traditional stereo has declined in the 21st century but there has been a concomitant increase in digital stereo. Enthusiasts

are building their own two camera set-ups or using computers to convert traditional slides to digital three-dimensional offerings.

Photo Travel Division. This division, established in 1969, was the youngest for 28 years (until EID began in 1997). *A travel image expresses the feeling of a time and a place, portrays a land, its people, or a culture in its natural state and has no geographic limitations.* The division, which was organized by its first chairman, **Charles E. Bowerman, APSA**, (later **FPSA**), contributed to PSA's overall growth especially during the 1970s; over 1200 members signed on the first year. A travel aide directory was begun in 1970, and the Travel Aide Program continues to operate independently today. "How to do it" pamphlets on travel photography were published by the division. Slide study groups of six, including the master photographer, were created. The photo travel division followed the pattern of the other divisions in establishing travel essay competitions, club competitions, star ratings, and *Who's Who*. While digital images have been accepted in exhibitions for sometime, beginning in 2008 digital images were eligible for the photo travel interclub competitions as well.

Electronic Imaging Division. PSA's newest division was begun in September 1997 by a group of creative photographers and the first chairperson, **Richard Frieders, Hon PSA, FPSA**. The division's purpose has been to familiarize amateur photographers with digital cameras, computers, imaging software and the use of the Internet. The division addresses both still and video photography and both color and black and white photography.

The division had a website from its inception to show what the division was doing and the services it could provide. Members provided evaluation of digital images and answered questions about both hardware and software used in the electronic imaging process. In the 21st century, online study circuits have been formed, a digital essay competition has begun, and exhibition acceptances have been applied to star ratings and *Who's Who* within the division.

There has been an emphasis upon new uses of digital equipment and software to make "creative" or altered reality images. Members of this division have developed the technical expertise to lead and educate the rest of PSA membership in embracing digital capture, and continue to carry out many teaching functions and activities. The division newsletters are available in PDF format through the main PSA website on the EID division link.

In summary, the several PSA divisions that are active today have had similar paths of development and have learned from one another. In the early years each division had an editor responsible for parts of the *PSA Journal* and some divisions had separate dues. Today PSA members may belong

to as many divisions as they wish. Participating in any division activity, fulfilling a volunteer role, or earning a star/galaxy rating within the division generally establishes membership. The business of divisions has been to run exhibitions, share knowledge in their special areas, and recognize excellence. In 1982 PSA's finances were limited, and PSA President **Frank Pallo**, put the divisions on a "self-financing" track requiring them to cover the costs of their activities. Since that time divisions have been able to do that well and most have substantial savings. As the art and science of photography expanded, the professionals who first began PSA formed their own specialized organizations, and the PSA divisions began directing their activities, helping amateurs improve their work. From black and white prints made from film in the 1930s to digital images used and shared in multiple ways in the 21st century, the picture of PSA divisions is a picture of the diverse and rapid growth of the art form we call photography. ■

Historical Vignette:

The History of PSA's *Who's Who*

The idea of a *Who's Who* in photography originated with the magazine, *American Photography*, whose editor, **Frank R. Fraprie**, was a famous photographer interested in ratings of photographic exhibitions. His magazine published an *American Annual*, which rated exhibitors (to the fourth decimal place) in black and white pictorial photography, until its demise in the 1940's.

In 1943, the Color Division of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) sponsored the first all-color slide show. It generated much enthusiasm and, in the same year, several shows were organized and the division began planning for the publication of the first *PSA Who's Who* for 1943. There were members who opposed the idea and tried unsuccessfully to prohibit the publication. But PSA President **John S. Rowan**, (later **FPSA**) supported the Division and the Society's first *Who's Who* was published in the *PSA Journal* in 1944. As the idea gained in popularity other divisions established their own *Who's Who* listing.

"The value of "Who's Who" is that it encourages photographic exhibitions to meet PSA requirements for recognition...and, in general, a show, which cannot obtain this listing, will not receive much support. Thus the listing becomes the important factor in PSA's constant effort to maintain high standards of performance of exhibitions. Each division establishes the recognition requirements for exhibitions in its own field." *From an article by H. J. Johnson, FPSA, PSA Journal, July 1973.*

In addition to the value for exhibition's standards, photographers around the world eagerly await PSA's annual *Who's Who* publication.

In 1952, the Pictorial Print Division reported 74 salons: the 3rd annual record number of exhibitors from the US, Canada and 40 other countries or territories. The May 1953 issue of the *PSA Journal* included the first Stereo listing and beginning with that issue, the complete *Who's Who* listing has been published annually in May. Prior to that, each division's listing had a different publication month.

In 1960, the first non-photographic listing was included with the advent of the *Journal Awards*.

Elena McTighe • Publications Vice President