

PPCO

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF CENTRAL OHIO

JANUARY 2009

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

PPCO 2009 PRINT COMPETITION

Our Annual PPCO Print Competition

Monday January 19, 2009

Print Registration Starts At

6:30 PM

at

The Berwick Manor

3250 Refugee Road

Columbus, Ohio

Details on page 4



PPCO PRESIDENTS MESSAGE January 2009

Hello everyone,

What a long strange trip it's been. Seems like only yesterday that I stepped on board with PPCO – yet so much has happened in this world and in our industry that it blows my mind! I then look within our organization and wonder if we have truly embraced the changes that challenge us as photographers. Have we, as a board, done enough to help and to educate each other as a family? Sometimes I feel we've fallen short of our obligation to you - the membership. Have we, as an organization, moved fast enough to keep up with what's happening to our "status" as photographers and to the value of our business in the eyes of our clients? We are facing enormous change and without challenging ourselves to move forward and succeed, it may seem impossible.

I feel very fortunate to be in this position now as your President. I feel it is my obligation, to listen to those of you who are new and to those of you who have been through the test of time. Time passes so quickly, decisions are made, rules are changed, but are we listening? I have had numerous opportunities to talk with some of you as you voiced your concerns. I have heard the voice of hardship and struggle and the voice of strength and encouragement. I believe we, as an organization, a family of photographers, need to start listening to each other and work together as a team to keep each other strong. We've been sitting too long on issues that really don't matter in the scope of things when it comes to the reality of the condition of our world and our place in it.

There is a force "out there" with the huge strides in technology that knocks on our door every day. We can choose to ignore it or to open the door and embrace it. We can use it to challenge ourselves to once again "stand out" as professionals and educate the consumer as to why it is so important they choose us! Let's help each other succeed and grow. It is time to speak out – to go forward. To be doing "pretty good" is not "good enough!" Let's remember that life isn't about who's better than whom or who is right or wrong. We can learn from each other's strengths and hardships.

I believe in a positive future for us as photographers but we need to make some changes in order to succeed. I can truly promise you, as President, that I will listen. I feel confident that each of your Executive Board members will do the same. We are here to help, and we can only do this if you express your thoughts, concerns and opinions. I cannot promise immediate change but I can promise that we can start to make it happen for the benefit to all of us. Thank you for your support and words of encouragement during this incredible journey. I only wish, in return, to give back what I've been given.

Jim Nardone
President

<i>PPCO Board of Directors</i>	
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	Elected Member Susan Conover jconover@adams.net
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<i>2008/2009 Calendar</i>
Sep. 8 Patrick Rice Seminar : Wedding Photography 2008 The State of the Industry
Oct. 13 Alexis Riffle "Creating Cash flow through Event Photography"
Nov. 3 Shawn Wright "Stop Trying to be Perfect and Start being Remarkable"
Nov. 9 & 10 Fall Two Day Conference - Hilton - Easton
Dec. 8 Members Christmas Party - The home of Penney Adams
Jan. 19 Print Competition - Judges Bob Davis, Darrell Moll, Gregg Wurtzler, Bob Hughes as Jury Chair
Feb. 9 TBA
Mar. 4 -9 Mid-East States Convention – Dayton OH
Mar. 16 Round Table & Swap Shop Moderator: TBA
Apr. 13 Jim Chagares Photoshop Tips and Techniques
May 11 TBA BOARD ELECTIONS

PPCO 2009 Print Competition Details

Monday, January 19, 2009 - Berwick Manor Party House

Categories: Wedding, Portrait, Illustrative, and Unclassified.

Classifications: Finished (8x10 - 16x20 meeting PPA Competition Standards)

Images of any shape and size are allowed and must be mounted on 16 x 20 mount board. (recommended mounting thickness is 1/8" to 3/8")

No Unfinished this year. So bring your best to be judged.

Cost: \$5.00 per print or 6 for \$25.00 - 6 print limit.

Prints: Titled 8x10 - 16x20 Mounted.

No frames, transparencies, or albums.

Judges:

Bob Davis

Darrell Moll

Gregg Wurtzler

Bob Hughes as Jury Chair

Judging will be based on PPA standards.

Please read the 12 Elements of a Merit Print (enclosed).

Please remember that it will take at least 5 of the 6 possible entries to be in the running for "PPCO Photographer of the Year"

Also please print the enclosed label (one per print) and attach to the back of your print(s) in the top left corner.

PPCO members should *not* permanently attach a form to a finished 16 x 20 print.

If a form were to be attached it could be rejected as a Mid East-States entry. (no MES entry should show evidence of entry in another print competition.)

This competition is anonymous, so only you will know it is your print being judged. So don't be shy. Enter your best prints and see how you do.

Wedding Contract Cancellation Blues

By Al Hopper

Director of Membership, Copyright & Government Affairs

Professional photographers aren't the only ones touched with economic concerns. Your customers are, too. But their concerns often become your own. For instance, it may be a sign of the times that more wedding couples are trying to limit expenses and cancel contracts.

Remember, though, that PPA can help.

According to Heather Lebow from Howe & Hutton (they handle Indemnification Trust claims for PPA), there has been a sharp increase in photography wedding contract cancellations. Many brides and grooms, despite having signed contracts stating non-refundable fees, are demanding full refunds. What can you do if you get the dreaded cancellation call?

Here are just two experiences that PPA members shared with us:

- Becky Johnson (BeckyJohnson Studios.com) – Becky accepted a last-minute booking that turned nightmarish. After the couple cancelled the wedding, the groom went so far as to threaten Becky with a lawsuit if she didn't give him a full refund. After contacting PPA, she found that the groom could only sue for half of the amount (as both bride and groom signed). Becky stuck to her contract, telling the groom that they could settle this in court...and never heard back. "I'm not Wachovia," states Becky. "This is not a deposit and withdrawal."

- Sam Sarkis (Sam Sarkis Photography) – What do you do if the groom unexpectedly dies after signing the contract and giving a deposit...but before the wedding? When faced with this emotional situation, Sam was understanding and gave the bride the money without checking the contract. Now, the groom's family is suing him for the deposit money, stating that it should have been returned to the estate, not the bride (as they were never married).

So if your wedding customer cancels, what can you do? After her own cancellation experience, PPA member Rebecca Zoumberos of Limelight Photography believes that all photographers need to "think like a businessperson." In her words, "We are turning away other business when we enter into a contract with a wedding client." Thanks to PPA members' shared experiences and Howe & Hutton's advice, we've compiled a list of steps for you to consider:

1. Look at your existing contract (most important of all)

- Make sure that you don't contradict yourself. The contract should not state that fees are non-refundable, yet later on in the contract, say that a particular fee is refundable.
- Review your cancellation policy. Do you have provisions for cancellations and postponements? What about time frames for engagement and wedding portrait sessions?
- Check with your state (or provincial) policy on refunds, as some laws do not allow "non-refundable" fees if challenged in court.
- Look at the sample contract on www.ppa.com as a possible guideline.

2. Establish your policy:
 - a. Decide if deposits can be used towards credits for portrait sittings or if they are “gone” once the event is cancelled. For instance, one PPA member offered to credit a sitting fee in stead of a refund. That credit was given as a gift to a friend of the ex-customer, and he ended up ordering images.
 - b. Create a step-by-step process so that you know where to start if someone cancels.
3. Communicate and consult with all parties involved:
 - a. Go over every part of the contract during a consultation (consider having customers initial each section, as Ernie Russell of Ernie Russell Photography does). Ask the clients if they have any questions.
 - b. Everyone should have a clear idea of what is to be expected from the photographer and what the photographer expects from them. Cancellations may be unavoidable, but if they are discussed beforehand, all parties know what will transpire.
 - c. Go with your “gut feeling” when you see red flags. Many PPA photographers interviewed stated that they ignored that feeling during the initial consultation. Later, they wished they had just turned the client away.
4. Strongly reiterate policies, such as any non-refundable deposits.
5. Track your correspondence, especially in regards to contracts and cancellations. Shaun Anthony of Shaun Anthony’s Clear Focus Photography kept a cancellation issue from getting ugly by keeping detailed notes with dates and times.
6. If refunds are given, have the recipients sign a release stating that the photographer owes them nothing further.
7. Don’t argue with the client (easier said than done, of course!):
 - a. This is a customer service issue. Even though these customers may be misinformed, they can still damage your reputation.
 - b. If the situation can’t be resolved amicably, don’t delay in consulting an attorney or the services of your malpractice protection.
8. Use PPA’s Indemnification Trust to ask questions and deal with issues Despite your best efforts, you will probably face a cancellation sometime. Hopefully, by following the above steps, that experience will be as painless as possible. Remember, PPA is standing beside you...just call 800.786.6277.

12 ELEMENTS OF A MERIT PRINT

The Photographic Exhibitions Committee (PEC) of PPA uses the 12 elements below as the "**gold standard**" to define a merit image. PEC trains judges to be mindful of these elements when judging images to the PPA merit level and to be placed in the International Print Exhibit at the annual convention. The use of these 12 elements connects the modern practice of photography and its photographers to the historical practice of photography begun nearly two centuries ago.

Twelve elements have been defined as necessary for the success of an art piece or image. Any image, art piece or photograph will reveal some measure of all twelve elements, while a visually superior example will reveal obvious consideration of each one. They are:

Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion.

Creativity is the external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.

Style is defined in a number of ways as it applies to a creative image. It might be defined by a specific genre or simply be recognizable as the characteristics of how a specific artist applies light to a subject. It can impact an image in a positive manner when the subject matter and the style are appropriate for each other, or it can have a negative effect when they are at odds.

Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.

Print Presentation affects an image by giving it a finished look. The mats and borders used should support and enhance the image, not distract from it.

Center of Interest is the point or points on the image where the maker wants the viewer to stop as they view the image. There can be primary and secondary centers of interest. Occasionally there will be no specific center of interest, when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest.

Lighting—the use and control of light—refers to how dimension, shape and roundness are defined in an image. Whether the light applied to an image is manmade or natural, proper use of it should enhance an image.

Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image.

Color Balance supplies harmony to an image. An image in which the tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color balance is not always harmonious and can be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect.

Technical excellence is the print quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing. Sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting and correct color all speak to the qualities of the physical print.

Technique is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, film choice, paper selection and more are part of the technique applied to an image.

Story Telling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect their own message or read her own story in an image.