



PalmBeachPost.com



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THE PALM BEACH POST 4TH ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST FOCUS ON NATURE



Kathleen E. Phelan

Grand Prize - Nature

Lighthouse Center for the Arts

June 6 – August 25, 2008

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Mission Statement

The Lighthouse Center for the Arts provides a bridge to the visual and performing arts for the community through unique collections, engaging exhibitions and cultural programs, a dynamic School of Art and diverse outreach activities.

Linda Frost

First Place - Close-ups

Occupation: Managing director, sales and business development, Palm Beach Gardens, FL.

A flowering cactus at Tropical World Nursery in Delray Beach.

"I am going to the Tulip Festival in Amsterdam this spring, so I took a photography class at the Palm Beach Photographic Centre with renowned floral photographer Barbara Ellison. I had never used a macro lens before, so she lent me hers to see how I liked it.

Obviously, I loved it! I loved how intricate and detailed flowers looked through this lens and was fascinated by the cacti and succulents. Needless to say, I ended up buying both the cactus and 100mm lens!"

Reagan Brenner

Second Place - Plants

Occupation: Property manager, Palm Springs, FL.

Water lily and reflections at the Society of Four Arts Gardens in Palm Beach.

"My mother had suffered a severe hemorrhagic stroke in September, a few days after turning 65. Not knowing what was in store in terms of her recovery I packed up my car, grabbed the cat, quit my job and left Florida. But the damage from the stroke was too severe, and Mom did not recover.

"A little over a month later, I was back in Florida, unemployed and depressed. I had rarely been able to go to the Society of the Four Arts Gardens because they are only open when most people, like me, are at work. Well, now I had all the time in the world.

"I spent several days there during October and November, feeling peaceful, sometimes sad, sometimes joyful. Focusing on photography allowed me to step outside myself and just be in the moment. I was playing with perspective and texture that day."

Duke Evans

First Place - Landscapes

Occupation: Engineer, Port St. Lucie, FL.

A smoky haze softens the morning sun over cypress trees at Blue Cypress Lake in Indian River County.

"The beginning of this photo started a couple of weeks earlier with large fires on the West Coast and Idaho. Heavy haze from the smoke had drifted to the East and Southeast states. I was on the lake in my kayak at daybreak, and I paddled for about 3 hours, getting some nice shots but nothing unusual. In the late morning, the clouds disappeared, and it became very calm with a very slight breeze from the north. The bright sun was being filtered and softened with a very heavy smoke haze. That's when I took the picture. No checking the settings, just a simple point and shoot in the automatic mode. I was just at 'the right spot at the right time' that day."

Kathleen E. Phelan

Grand Prize - Nature

Occupation: Consultant, Jupiter, FL.

Tri-colored heron at Wakodahatchee Wetland in Delray Beach.

"It was such a nice day to see all of the wildlife. I was so excited to begin using my new camera. I was just aiming and clicking at everything! I didn't even realize what a good shot I had until a few days later, when I figured out how to upload the digital images from my camera to my computer. It was just luck. I'm a novice; I just aimed the camera and pushed the button."

NATURAL WINNERS

Florida has never looked so good.

Palm Beach Post readers entered almost 4,000 photos in our fourth annual "Focus on Nature" Photography Contest, which showcases the natural beauty of our state.

There were many wonderful images entered in all five categories. It was very tough to choose the final winners.

The grand prize, first-place and second-place winners will receive a one-day nature photography session, among other prizes.

Please enjoy these images of our state, as seen through the eyes of some very talented residents.

- John J. Lopinot

Deputy Director of Photography
Palm Beach Post

Ronald Kelly

Third Place - Landscapes

Occupation: CAD Designer,
West Palm Beach, FL.

A cloud is reflected in the water amidst grass and lily pads at Grassy Waters Preserve in West Palm Beach.

"I really like shooting reflections, so I wondered what a cloud would look like reflected in the water. I tried to keep the grass and lily pads in the picture to make it readily apparent that you were looking at a reflection."

Ruth Pannunzio

Second Place - Animals

Occupation: Fiscal specialist III, engineering & public works, West Palm Beach, FL.

Black-bellied whistling duckling covered in duckweed at Green Cay Wetlands in suburban Delray Beach.

"There were eight black-bellied whistling ducklings; the babies look like little bumblebees. It was difficult to capture all eight babies at once, but this little one separated itself from the others and decided to test its wings. It made me laugh seeing all the duckweed on its belly and its 'get tough' appearance."

Greg Thompson

Third Place - Close-ups

Occupation: Student, Winter Springs, FL.

An eastern diamondback rattlesnake in Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area in Orange County.

"It was early January, not usually the best time of year to look for cold blooded reptiles, but with the sun high and a hint of warmth in the air, we were hopeful nonetheless. Not five minutes into our search, we were stunned at what lay before us. It was an eastern diamondback rattlesnake -- hands down, the most formidable serpent in the Southeast and one of the most strikingly beautiful. This was the first diamondback I had encountered in the wild."

"We spent a good 15 minutes photographing and admiring this magnificent and increasingly rare reptile before it slithered off into the palmettos. From a safe distance, I got on my hands and knees, and used the zoom to focus in on the snake's face."

"All in all, I hope that other people can learn to appreciate the beauty of these often misunderstood creatures. Everything in nature has its place and deserves to be respected."

Reinaldo Diaz

Third Place - Oceans

Occupation: Dive master at The Scuba Club,
Lake Worth, FL.

Flamingo tongue snail on a purple sea fan at "Anchoring Spot" reef,
south of the Lake Worth Inlet.

"Flamingo tongues (a type of snail) are one of my favorite things to see on the reefs because they are so tiny, yet very colorful. I really wanted to capture their color in this photo by using the flash as a fill only."

Albert Williams

First Place - Plants

Occupation: Retired police lieutenant,
Hobe Sound, FL.

Tickseed and pine trees at
Royal Palm Beach Pines Natural Area.

"I had to lie down to get a very low view to highlight the wildflowers and yet show the sky and pine trees in a darkened background."

Michael Rosenbaum

First Place - Animals

Occupation: Library worker, Delray Beach, FL.

Nesting ospreys in Everglades National Park.

"The ospreys were nesting; he was alternately bringing in branches and then trying to make love. She was not in the mood for either and was discouraging him. In the next frame, he closes her beak with his claw, evidently fed up with her attitude. Mating season is a great opportunity for photographers to record interesting behavior."

Brian Logan

Second Place - Oceans

Occupation: Overnight team member at Target,
Palm Beach Gardens, FL.

Long exposure of the ocean at night at Juno Beach.

"My friend and I were roaming the beach late at night, and I'd brought my camera because I was itching to experiment with odd exposures. I have a collection of similar photos with different white balances and apertures, etc. I couldn't decide between the one that won and another that appears more red, and my friend suggested I use the blue version."

Frank DiAnnunzio

Second Place - Landscapes

Occupation: Assistant principal,
Olympic Heights High School, Boca Raton, FL.

Palm trees waving in the breeze
near Deerfield Beach Pier.

"I was practicing with blurred action and was primarily taking photos of the bikers along A1A. My wife and son were sitting under the palm trees along the sidewalk. After a few minutes of sitting with them, I noticed a perfect shot was available within the breezy palms."

Ruel Tafalla

First Place - Oceans

Occupation: Full-time student, Greenacres, FL.

Cloudy sunrise over the ocean at
Boynton Beach Inlet.

"We arrived there 30 minutes before sunrise, but it was raining hard, so I waited for a few more minutes. Suddenly, the rain stopped, but it was cloudy, so I had to shoot a sunless sunrise. Then it rained again, so I ran back quickly under the lifeguard shelter. After the sky cleared, I headed back home thinking I never got a good shot."

Robert Blitz

Second Place - Close-ups

Occupation: Retired ad-agency owner,
Boynton Beach, FL.

Tail feathers of a peacock at Flamingo Gardens.

"My patience had waned in attempts to get the peacock to perform with his typical fanned-out feathers pose. He became impatient, too, and ran off down a path. As I chased him, I found that my lens was focusing on the bane of all nature photographers -- another animal's rear end. But surprisingly, what I was actually capturing was a section of tail feathers that provided a beautiful combination of shape and texture and color."

Ken Corregan

Third Place - Animals

Occupation: Golf professional at Maple Leaf Golf and
Country Club, Punta Gorda, FL.

Young burrowing owls at their nest near St. Andrews
South Golf Course in Punta Gorda.

"My wife and I were on an afternoon walk. When we approached the area, all six of the babies were outside, but when we got closer, two remained standing outside to get their pictures taken. I got this photo when I turned my head with the camera to get a different angle of them, and as I did so, the owl turned his head."

Cary Thomas Self

Third Place - Plants

Occupation: Retail manager, Miami, FL.

A dragonfly alights on grass at Crandon Park Visitor
and Nature Center in Key Biscayne,
with a distant moon still shining in the sky.

"It was late in January, and I was celebrating my birthday. Flipping through the pages of my youth, I came across a photograph of a 1-year-old boy sitting on a coral rock wall. In his right hand, an ice cream cone was dripping in the summer heat. Over his right shoulder, a camel was about to help himself to the melting treat. Seeing this picture of myself made me long to visit the old zoo."

"I was so surprised to see how beautiful this revitalized garden was. I walked around, and was visited by turkeys, ducks, swans, peacocks and iguanas. Flowers and plants grew all around. When I finally sat down, I looked up to see the moon overhead. I shot a few shots and then noticed the dragonfly at play."