

Featured Artist of the Month Jim West

James (Jim) West is an Ocean Shores retiree who began a life-long love and pursuit of still photography as an art form at the age of 10. He is the Associated Arts of Ocean Shores Artist of the Month.

With his interest aided by a local 4-H club in his native Pomona, CA, Jim was doing black-and-white developing and printing in his own darkroom, and had won his first photography award, at the age of 14.



His love of photography was useful in his work. With a career as an aerospace engineer specializing in microelectronics, he did a lot of technical photography that involved using processes and procedures that would exactly achieve images that were precisely pre-conceived. However, that was the opposite of his artistic approach to finding and creating images that please him and others.

“I like to take shots that capture a mood,” he observed. “I was taught a more photojournalistic approach to shooting,” he said, explaining that the idea is simply that there are good images everywhere, if your photographic “eye” is open to finding them.



He lived in Kent, WA, for a few years in the 1980s, and has a sister in Maple Valley. When he retired in 2015, the “desert rat” who photographed SoCal motorcycle racing for 20 years, searched far and wide but knew he wanted to live at the water. His sister was familiar with Ocean Shores, and he went through the process that many locals here have experienced, of visiting, looking at homes and falling in love with the



area. For Jim, the combination of Duck Lake and the Pacific Ocean sealed the deal. With retirement, he found the time to pursue his love of photography to greater heights. He shoots some digital, but finds many situations in which he prefers to go old-school and shoot real film. And although he often shoots color, he hasn't lost

his love of the creative aspects of B/W photography. His concession to the 21st century is that he scans his negatives. But he strives to limit digital trickery at the print stage to the same effects as he achieved with the types of image enhancing that he learned years and years ago in the darkroom. Lately, he has been working with panoramic images shot with some of his medium-format film cameras.



Jim enjoys street photography and travel, and has found some of his favorite images in the happy confluence of these



two interests. For example, a simple situation that caught his eye in Malaga, Spain, yielded what he calls "my signature shot" - a vintage brick wall behind a street musician with a sign in his open guitar case that reads, "Gracias."

Soon after he moved to Ocean Shores, he got involved in a local photography group and was subsequently invited to join the Gallery of Ocean Shores, where his art can be viewed.

An extensive collection of his photography, curated into several galleries, can be found on his website, www.jameswestphotoart.com.