

# 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 PSA Journal

Elena McTighe, APSA • Publications Vice President



Elena McTighe,  
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The first instrument of communication for the newly formed Photographic Society of America (PSA) was known as the *Bulletin*: first published in April 1934, in mimeographed form and edited by then Society Secretary **B.H. Chatto**. Almost immediately ambitious plans were begun for a "P.S.A. Journal" and the first issue of the *Journal*, printed by letterpress, was published in March 1935.

The creation of the *Journal* was not without controversy and it was attacked in the *Photogram* newsletter, "Its destiny is obscured by the fact that those behind it seem to have no clear cut ideas of its purpose and functions." PSA President **Max Thorek** (later FPSA) found it necessary to write a rebuttal, included in the publication's first issue, defending the decision to create the *Journal*. "Certain members have threatened withdrawal of membership and support if we contemplate publishing a *Journal*...But their attitude furnishes a drastic contrast with the genuine encouragement, personal and editorial aid, as well as the open purse offered by other members...their slogan being 'Build our National organization and count on us unreservedly'."

The first issue of the *Journal* was 16 pages on 8½ x 11 inch paper; its subjects were pictorial and technical, reflecting the interest of the fledgling Society. Originally, the *Journal* was a quarterly publication whose goal was to cater to the advanced amateur and professional photographer and to the technician. **R.L. Van Oosting**, who served as Vice President

of the Society, agreed to become the editor of the new publication. Although the first color

cut was printed in 1936, there were problems of printing quality, costs and expenses; arguments over the varied interests of the membership and controversy over the "no advertisement policy." With so many difficulties, in 1936 only three issues were published, totaling 56 pages. In 1940, **Fred Quellmalz** (later APSA) was appointed the Managing Editor of the *Journal* and the publication took on new life. Still issued on a quarterly basis, in 1940, 140 pages were published and in 1941, 180. By using offset lithography, the quality of halftones was improved and better articles were published. Wartime cuts reduced the *Journal* to 6 ½ x 9 ½ inches, however 9 issues were published in 1942 and 1943. The goal of 10 issues plus a *Special Annual Number* (containing the illustrated catalogue of the PSA Annual International Exhibition, the reports of officers, the By-Laws and the Directory of the Society) was finally realized in 1944.

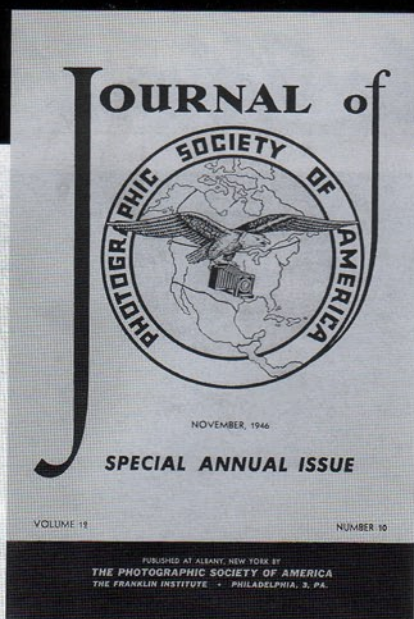
By the 1950's, PSA was thriving: membership was rising and the *Journal* was "choked with ads, with at least 15 manufacturers and dealers regularly taking full page ads." (**Mary Ellen Brucker, FPSA, PSA Journal** October 1994) *Journal* issues frequently ran between 100 and 200 pages per issue; each division had its own *Bulletin*, which was published along with the *Journal* and pages were numbered consecutively throughout the year.

In the fifties an argument raged over what type of material the *Journal* should be publishing. According to PSA President (1949-1951) **John Mulder, APSA**, one school of thought felt that "the *Journal* should emphasize better photography and how to accomplish it while another group felt that each issue should devote itself to publishing news and gossip about the members." President Mulder asked members to send him a postcard voting on which school of thought should become the approved course of action. The result was an official written policy to reduce space for news and gossip and



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First issue of the *Journal*,  
March 1935



Special edition of the *PSA Journal*, November 1946

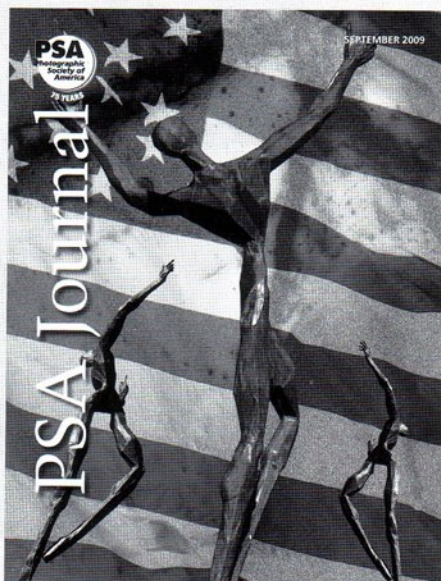
to increase space for worthwhile articles and features of interest to all. Division news and personal items were to appear in the Division Bulletins. In 1957 a formula was created allocating the amount of annual space to be dedicated to Features and Articles; News; Services; and Periodic Departments. With flexible modifications the guidelines set in 1957 are still followed today. To encourage member participation, the *Journal* Editorial Awards were created in 1957. The Division Bulletins were discontinued in the late 70's and news was, and still is, handled by the division news editors.

PSA members have made significant contributions to the *PSA Journal*. **Fred Quellmalz, Hon. PSA**, starting in 1940 served as managing editor for 13 years and aided in establishing the *Journal* as one of the major benefits of PSA Membership. **Robert McIntyre, FPSA**, served as editor for 18 years from 1960 to 1978. **George Cushman, Hon. PSA**, published 275 feature

articles all on the subject of Motion Pictures. As of 2008, **Jean Timmermeister, FPSA**, former Publications Vice President, contributed over 135 articles and that number increases monthly.

"The *PSA Journal* is one of the most visible and most universal elements of our Society. To reflect, that concept embodies not only the challenge, but the ultimate success of producing each issue of the *Journal*." (**Byron Hindman, Hon. PSA, FPSA**, former Publications Vice President, *PSA Journal*, September 1997)

All PSAers involved in producing the *Journal* extend congratulations and join in celebrating 75 years of the Photographic Society of America.



*PSA Journal*, September 2009



*PSA Journal*, September 1998

## Historical Vignette:

### ***PSA Journal Gold Star Awards***

In 1957 a program, whose purpose was to encourage members to write for the *PSA Journal*, was established. PSA's volunteer authors were to be recognized with editorial stars for publishing articles in the *Journal*. A formula was devised and bronze, silver and gold stars were awarded. Since that time, there have been only 45 members who have received Gold stars. The Gold star is quite an achievement as it requires 1000 points, as opposed to the 40 or 200 point jumps for the Bronze and Silver stars. The second Gold star requires another 1000 points and so on. Since 1955 only three Second Gold Stars have been awarded (**Wade Clutton, FPSA**, **Max Perchick, FPSA**, and **Onas Scandrette, FPSA**). **Sil Horwitz, FPSA**, and **Ira Current, FPSA**, both have four Gold stars but the leader is **George Cushman, Hon. FPSA**, with five Gold stars. He was very active in the Cinema section back in the '70's, receiving his fifth Gold star in March 1977.

*Leroy Lambright, APSA  
Editorial Awards Chairman*