

[Top Shots]

Winners in Delaware Beach Life's photography contest find many ways to capture the beauty of the scenes, wildlife and people of our region

"Emotion." "Feel." "Mood." The judges were impressed by more than just picture quality when they viewed the 307 entries in *Delaware Beach Life's* fifth annual photography contest. They saw the less tangible qualities that elevate a snapshot into a prize-winning photograph.

The descriptive words above were heard a lot as professional photographers Carolyn Watson and David Koster joined *Delaware Beach Life* editor and publisher Terry Plowman to choose the winning shots in three categories: scenic, people and wildlife. See the individual captions for their comments about the first-, second- and third-place winners.

The judges did, however, notice some recurring flaws that kept many engaging images from rising to the top of the winners list. "Sharpness is a huge factor in the initial judging stage," said Plowman, noting that unsharp photographs were quickly eliminated. Koster, of Portraits in the Sand, noted that "backgrounds are important, especially if they distract from the subject of the photo." And Watson, of Carolyn Watson Photography, suggested that entrants would have more success if they considered cropping, and placing a subject off-center, as ways to improve composition.

But each of the winning entries on these pages surmounted those challenges, becoming an "all-around home run," as Watson described one of them. Christine Durst of Milton was a big winner, with one first-place and two second-place awards.

The contest added a new element this year, asking *Delaware Beach Life's* Facebook fans to vote for their favorite image among the six honorable mention winners. The one they chose appears on the Visual Vacation page at the end of this issue.

The deadline to enter *Delaware Beach Life's* 2012 Photography Contest will be July 1, as usual, so start shooting!

Check out page 72 to see the favorite honorable mention photo, as voted by our Facebook fans.



PEOPLE Honorable Mention by Cassandra R. Compton, Port Tobacco, Md.



SCENIC First Place by Ray Daly, East Fallowfield, Pa.

Judges' comments: "Nice reflection and great colors," said Carolyn Watson. Terry Plowman liked the abstract nature of this photograph.

WILDLIFE Second Place by Christine M. Durst, Milton

Judges' comments: David Koster liked the striking color, the sharpness and the composition of this photo. Terry Plowman said, "It has a lot of character, and it's a unique subject for this area."



SCENIC Third Place
by Wayne Perry, Youngstown, Ohio

Judges' comments: "You can tell a story with each part of this image," said Carolyn Watson. David Koster saw it as a "classic beach scene." "It has nice lighting, and the fence brings you into the image."

PEOPLE Second Place
by Christine M. Durst, Milton

Judges' comments: David Koster liked the placement of the eyes and mouth. Carolyn Watson liked the tight crop — "Just art!," she said.



PEOPLE Honorable Mention
by Janice Wyatt Evans, Silver Spring, Md.

WILDLIFE Honorable Mention, by J. Scott Figurski, Georgetown



WILDLIFE First Place
by Ken Arni, Fenwick Island

Judges' comments: "Great action shot," said Terry Plowman. David Koster liked the sharpness and noted that the oystercatchers were an uncommon subject.



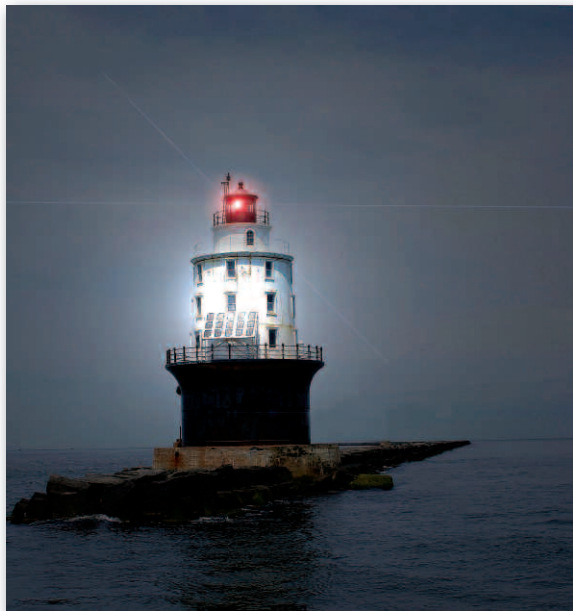


PEOPLE Third Place
by James B. Hartsig,
Bethany Beach

Judges' comments: "The image is sharp, and shows emotion," said Terry Plowman. He liked that it's playful, but also shows a little fear as the child runs from the wave.

WILDLIFE Third Place
by Georges Weaver,
Bear

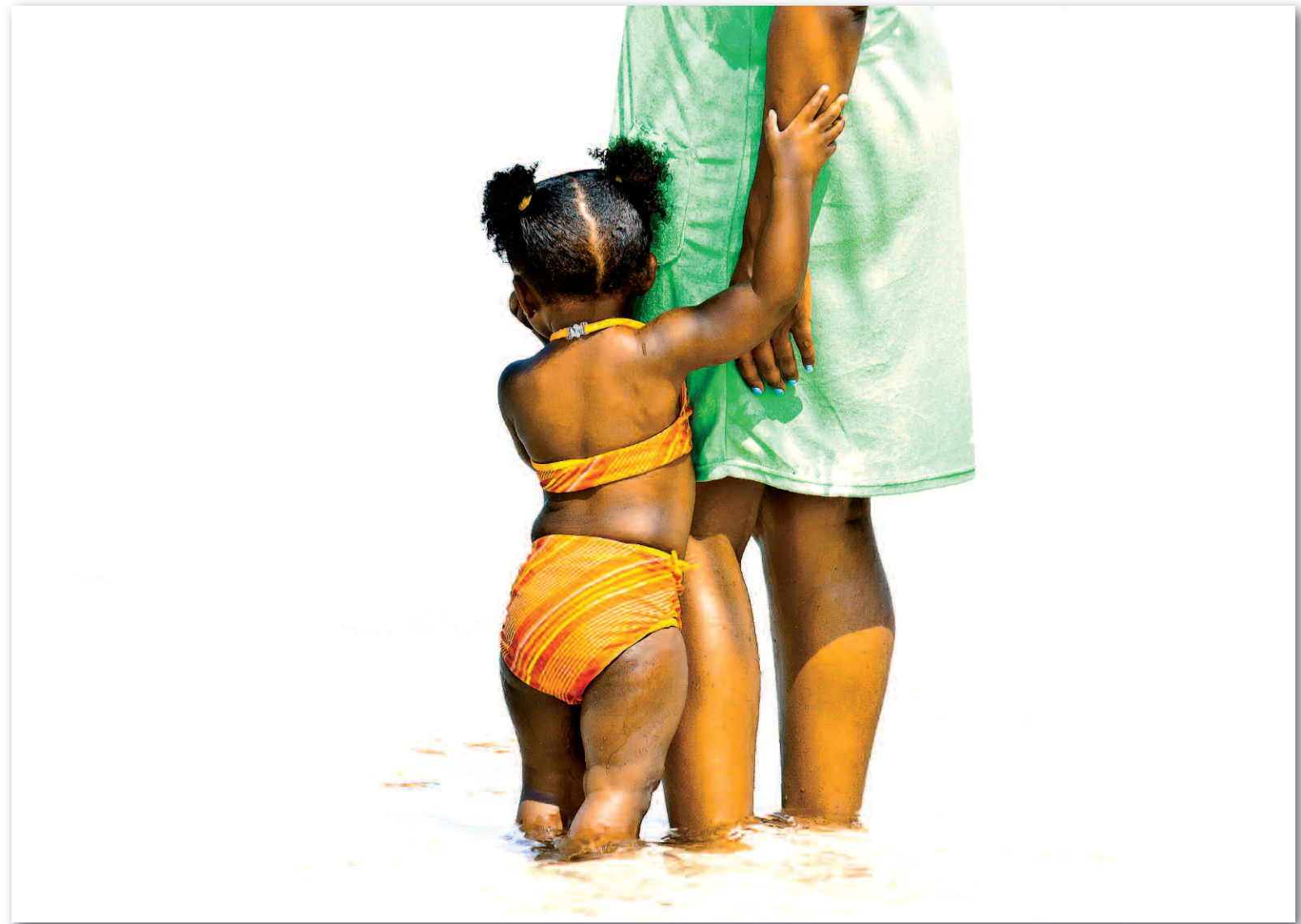
Judges' comments: David Koster liked the composition, and thought this photo had nice color. "Interesting subject," said Carolyn Watson.



SCENIC Honorable Mention
by Lee Swankowski, Lewes



WILDLIFE Honorable Mention
by Tom Taylor, Lewes

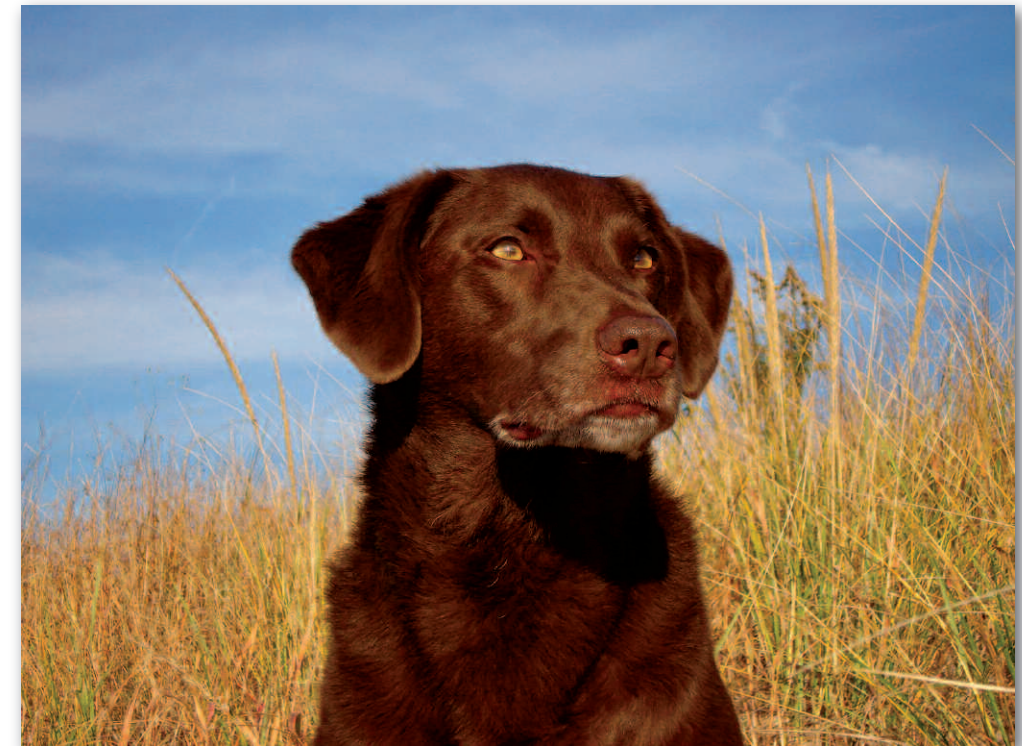


PEOPLE First Place
by Christine M. Durst, Milton

Judges' comments: "I love the emotion. I like the whole feel of it — the fear and comfort between the child and adult," said Carolyn Watson. Terry Plowman thought the image had interesting color.

SCENIC Second Place
by Mary Beth Smith, Bel Air, Md.

Judges' comments: "It's a classic shot of a coastal dog," said David Koster. Carolyn Watson liked the intensity captured by this photograph.





Sunset Spectacular

PHOTOGRAPH AND TEXT BY BUD OAKLEY

The Indian River Bay behind my house in Ocean View always produces a beautiful sunset. I walked down to the gazebo with my dog and my girlfriend to check it out one winter, and it was especially breathtaking. I grabbed my camera and snapped a few shots, and they all came out looking spectacular. It's easy to get a great picture when the subject is so perfect. ■

Editor's note: This image was an honorable mention winner in the scenic category of the 2011 Delaware Beach Life Photography Contest, and was picked as the best of the six honorable mention winners in voting on the Delaware Beach Life Facebook page. See pages 48-53 for other winners.