

## **My Public Response to an Unsigned, Anonymous, Nasty Letter Commenting on My Judging Performance of February 17, 2010**

I received the following unsigned letter in the mail on February 23, 2010. Because the author of this letter did not have the courage to sign his/her name, leaving me no opportunity to respond directly, I have asked Wade to publish both the text of the original letter and my reply.

I do this, not to “get back” at a disgruntled member, but rather to address what I consider to be some misconceptions obviously held by this person and possibly by other members as well. I have also chosen to respond publicly to lend my encouragement to future judges who, hopefully, will not be reluctant to offer incisive commentary for fear of receiving anonymous letters such as this

The text of the letter I received and my response is as follows:

***“Dear Dick Glass,***

***I was astonished to hear you shred so many good photos last night with your so called expertise”***

I don't recall “shredding” any good photos. What I attempted to do was to point out those aspects of the prints which I believed could have been improved. That I did so in a forceful and unequivocal manner is my personal style was entirely intentional and for that I offer no apology. I have never embraced the concept of “damning with faint praise” and have long been a consistent and vocal critic of “politically correct” judges who “play nice” with the image, fail to point out even the most glaring errors and then “pass” the image on the next round! Where is the educational value in that?

***“Your comment, what really bothers me.....is so personal. We weren't there to find out what your preferences were, just to get some good feed back on our work.”***

You did get some “good” feedback on your work! Unfortunately, what you fail to realize is that “good feedback” does not exist in a vacuum. The commentary offered by any judge is heavily influenced by his own personal photographic style, experience, emotions and vision. “Good feedback” is not telling you what you want to hear; nor is it tepid comments which leave the photographer wondering what the judge really meant to say. If your idea of “good feedback” is only hearing about the successful elements of your image then you will be consistently disappointed with any judge who has the temerity to offer real suggestions for improvement.

The above notwithstanding however, if you are “really bothered” by my use of the “first person personal” as a form of speech rather than the “third person impersonal”, then I plead guilty and apologize. If this be true however, I submit that it reveals more about you than me.

***“You weren’t at the PSA, a place where you might show off all of your overly critical, snobby opinions.”***

This statement speaks for itself and I will not dignify it with a reply!

***“I think you were a terrible introduction to the guests who were in attendance.”***

You are certainly entitled to your opinion but I hope that opinion wasn’t shared by the majority of our guests or members. As a guest or new member wanting to perhaps learn a bit more about photography or at least experience alternative ways of dealing with photographic challenges and opportunities, I would hope that a judge’s forthright approach to image evaluation would be the norm rather than the exception.

***“Next time you want to gripe, gripe, gripe, why don’t you stay home?”***

***Sincerely, A Member”***

No, I don’t intend to stay home. I would much prefer to work within the system to identify and help solve those problems which have caused me to “gripe, gripe, gripe”. I find this far more effective than writing anonymous nasty letters to people with whom I disagree!

A personal note to my “anonymous critic”

After you get over being angry with me, let’s get together over coffee and try to work through this. I’ll buy.

Dick Glass