

Submission to Accompany my D68 50th Reunion Virtual Art Gallery Exhibition

I've always lived in Rochester, NY, the epicenter of photography, and have been a snapshot photographer for as long as I can remember. I probably still have the Kodak Brownie 'Holiday' my parents gave me for my 12th birthday. Luckily, my life has been a nearly unbroken series of photos that put me in the right place at the right time - with camera in hand.

In High School, carrying a used Zeiss 'Exacta' 35mm SLR salvaged from my father's U of R Medical School lab, I served as photographer for the school newspaper. This mostly involved covering sports events but also led to numerous - and a few notorious - 'candid' photos that found their way into the yearbooks.

After a decade-long gap when my 'focus' was turned elsewhere, I picked up the camera again in the mid-seventies and began chronicling family activities with Sally and her two children. The availability of high-quality point-and-shoot cameras and digital photography came at the perfect time for capturing the arrival and exploits of five grand-children.

In 2000, beginning with a week among the sea lions, iguanas and blue-footed boobies of the Galapagos, Sally and I launched a fascinating - and photogenic - phase of cultural and eco-centered travel. Since then, we've enjoyed the natural attractions of Belize, Costa Rica, South Africa and Botswana. We've joined Dartmouth Alumni Travel on the Danube and Volga rivers and in the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. On our own, we've toured through the canals of France and travelled the byways of England, Ireland and Iceland. These trips have left us with a trove of memories - and images.

Annual mini-reunions of Dartmouth '68 skiers have brought another wellspring of imagery, not to mention the food, fun and renewed friendships. Closer to home, we spend a significant amount of warm-weather time on the Canadian side of Lake Ontario, at Sally's family cottage on the Bay of Quinte, where water skiing, swimming, sailing and canoeing are almost as photogenic as the resident herons, coyotes and mink.

In the slide-show you'll find images from nearly all of the above. I've tried to pick shots that invite you to look twice, or that tell a story that reaches at least a little bit beyond the frame. Hopefully you'll have time to think what the "rest of the story" might be.

My career of fifty years (and counting) as a technical problem-solver and manager in the field of optics has - perhaps surprisingly - had very little to do with photography. Ironically, it was Dartmouth's development of BASIC - the computer language - that opened this fascinating door for me in 1968 and allowed me to participate at the leading edge of many important optical developments along the way - microchip photolithography, laser printing, diffractive- & micro-optics and currently laser-based bio-assay instrumentation.

Peter Emmel
April 28, 2018

Captions & Comments for Peter Emmel's D68 50th Reunion Virtual Art Gallery Images

AFRICA:

In 2008, Sally and I spent two weeks in southern Africa with our son and his family. We celebrated Christmas Eve in Cape Town, then flew to Victoria Falls for two days, and from there to Botswana where we spent two nights in each of three photo safari camps in the Okavango Delta. My first four photos are from this wonderful trip. A memorable highlight I was not able to adequately capture was the 6-passenger flight between camps, which included buzzing the strip at each camp before landing, to chase away the ostriches and impala.

PeterEmmel_01_SleepyLion-OkavangoDelta-Botswana-2008

We nicknamed this impressive lion "Aslan" and watched him for almost an hour as he meandered across the savanna. Eventually, he lay down in a small sandy clearing, rolled over on his back, massive paws in the air, and looked longingly in our direction. That look from our domestic shorthairs would be an unmistakable appeal for a tummy rub, but our guide emphatically vetoed Sally's impulse.

PeterEmmel_02_BaboonWalk-NearCapeTown-SouthAfrica-2008

A day trip from Cape Town included a "Baboon Walk" where a guide led us into the midst of a semi-wild troop of Chacma baboons in their natural environment. Following her warning not to interact with them, or make any sudden or threatening moves, we enjoyed a delightful hour of inter-species hanging out.

PeterEmmel_03_MekoroFlotilla-OkavangoDelta-Botswana-2008

The Xigera camp in Botswana is on an island surrounded by wetland wildlife, which we experienced up close in dugout canoes called mekoros.

PeterEmmel_04_FamousLastViews-OkavangoDelta-Botswana-3008

This crocodile is not one of the creatures you want to see at eye level from a mekoro. Luckily, he was not as big as he seems in this photo. Doubly lucky, we did not encounter him until shortly *after* re-boarding the canoes after a carefree swim ... just around the bend.

BAY OF QUINTE, ONTARIO:

Nearly a century ago, Sally's mother bought property that included a turn-of-the-century lawn bowling clubhouse, situated on a beautiful bay on the Canadian side of Lake Ontario. The clubhouse had a huge kitchen, a living room with a dramatic stone fireplace, and a wide veranda, all supported on cedar posts and surrounded by a foundation of glacial boulders. Sally has spent every summer of her life at this idyllic cottage, among friends, children, grandchildren ... and wildlife.

PeterEmmel_05_CoyotePupsInOurBackyard-BayOfQuinte-Ontario-2012

On an early morning in June, I was sipping coffee and gazing out over 'The Bay' from the veranda steps when I heard a rustle beside me. I was startled to see an equally startled puppy staring up at me from just outside the foundation. As I mentally processed where a puppy might have come

from, he dove between the stones and disappeared under the cottage - joining what eventually turned out to be four coyote siblings and their coyote mother.

PeterEmmel_06_HeronAtOurBreakWall-BayOfQuinte-Ontario-2013

On a calm mid-summer morning, with the sun still low and Sally's flowers in full bloom, I shoved off in our little aluminum rowboat, to see if I could capture that mood on film. As I floated, trying different angles and framings, a great blue heron glided in and landed on the gravel slope of our boat ramp. Anticipating that even a small movement might spook him, I quickly zoomed the camera and snapped his picture. He seemed unfazed, so I drifted closer, snapping pictures all the way. He not only did not fly off, he moved toward me, wading into the water to snatch a minnow. He then proceeded to wade slowly and purposefully in front of the flowerbox, paying zero attention to me. Shortly after I took this photo - from less than 20 feet away - I had to take a few strokes on the oars to avoid banging into the boat hoist. The heron reacted to the oars with a single giant flap of his wings that lifted him up onto the dock. There he stayed, while I rowed ashore, hauled the boat up the ramp and walked back to the cottage - carrying nearly a hundred photos of this un-flappable heron.

PeterEmmel_07_GranddaughterPrincess-Toronto-2010

Our daughter and her two children live in Toronto, so they spend a considerable amount of time at the cottage. We also visit them often in Toronto. A favorite outing is Toronto's "One-Of-A-Kind" craft show and sale at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds, where Lucy's favorite booth was the one filled with princess dresses.

TRAVEL:

Travel has always been important in my life, but it usually involved visiting relatives, visiting customers, going to Disney World. However, our trip to the Galapagos in 2000 with a small 'Nature Discoveries' group kicked off a series of wonderful trips taken just for the fun of seeing unique places in small groups.

PeterEmmel_08_SallyBreathingTheLiteraryAir-StStephensGreen-Dublin-2010

Most of my travel photos are the usual tourist shots, but this one of Sally on a bench in St. Stephen's Green captures the essence of why we spent a week, breathing the literary air of Dublin. The roles had been reversed the previous week in northern England, where we traipsed through Austerfield, Scrooby and Babworth on the trail of my 'Pilgrim Fathers' roots.

BUCKET LIST:

PeterEmmel_09_Ballooning-LetchworthUpperFalls-NY

Ballooning is one of those things everyone should do at least once. In Upstate New York, the coolest place for ballooning is Letchworth State Park - known as the Grand Canyon of the East. You lift off and drift up over (or in our case through) the treetops, then descend to literally touch the Genesee River. Skimming just above the water, you glide over the lip of the Upper Falls and then drop into the gorge below, before finally soaring up and out toward the sunset.

PeterEmmel_10_BrightAngelSunset-GrandCanyon-2017

The septuagenarian class of 1968 includes a few who put 'their muscles and their brains' (or was it their joints) to the test in April, 2017, at the Grand Canyon. We hiked down the Kaibab Trail, spent a night at Phantom Ranch, then hiked back up the Bright Angel Trail the next day. This is the view looking back down the Bright Angel in the setting sun, with a feeling of complete satisfaction, on the way to the Bright Angel Bar after a long soak in the bathtub.

SKIING:

I didn't hook up with the D68 western ski mini-reunion group until 2009 - which I think was their tenth year. I've been to every one since then, and it's always a blast - regardless of the snow conditions. Occasionally, there's an extra bonus side trip - Snowmobiles to Granite Hot Springs near Jackson Hole, Olympic Biathlon outing near Park City, Yellowstone XC Ski & Geyser watch with bison filling the highway, Amtrak's Empire Builder from Chicago to Whitefish Montana, and the Canadian Powder Loop.

PeterEmmel_11_FlurriesOverLakeLouise-Alberta-2011

Powder skiing in the Canadian Rockies is worth the effort of getting there. Five of us (four '68s and a '67) hit five areas in five days. We only found powder at two of them, but it was worth it. At Lake Louise, the powder was shallow, but the groomers were terrific and the view across the valley was spectacular - showing that someone was getting powder somewhere. We eventually found it at Revelstoke and Whitewater, both in British Columbia - where most of the snow in this photo was falling.

PeterEmmel_12_SunValleyChair-Idaho-2015

The profound lack of snow for D68's trip to Sun Valley in 2015 made it a little hard to move around the mountain, but we found enough for a good week of skiing. This shot shows the northeast-facing slopes with good snow cover. However, on the far side of this ridge, below the copse of trees, was a southeast-facing slope of bare grass. Snow conditions at any given point were completely determined by which way the slope faced. In a hundred feet, we could ski from powder to crust to cement to slush, then make a turn and reverse the sequence.

PeterEmmel_13_PBR-ToGo-BigSky-MT-2016

You never know when a stranger will offer you a PBR. This one's for our irrepressible classmate and ski buddy, Rick Pabst, and that's Hap and Susan Ridgway in the foreground.

OTHER:

PeterEmmel_14_CeremonialGoat-FortHenry-Kingston-Ontario-2014

"Wanna get away?" This ceremonial goat graced (and disgraced) the parade ground in Kingston, Ontario, at historic Fort Henry, where we took our grandkids for a tour and military exhibition.

PeterEmmel_15_CivilWarRIP-MtHopeCemetery-RochesterNY-2009

Rochester's Mount Hope Cemetery has numerous famous occupants, including Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Paul Robeson. Located a block from my childhood home, this cemetery holds some 350,000 burials in its convoluted glacial moraine and esker terrain. It's where I learned to skateboard and where my parents now rest. On a lovely day in May, a solitary robin keeps watch over the Civil War section.