



THE JOURNAL

PHOTOGRAPHS / STORIES / OBSERVATIONS

JOE LIPKA

JULY 2020

WELCOME TO THE JOURNAL

JULY 2020

En Passant

A French term, loosely translated means “in passing.” It is usually used to describe an offhand comment made in conversation. It’s also used in the game of chess to describe the movement of a pawn near the beginning of a match.

We make images in passing that we are neither aware of nor understand them at that time. None the less, we make them and pass on with our life. Later, we come back to the images and wonder how they made their way into our lives.

We pass places, objects and people every day and only capture a fraction of those encounters. Sometimes we plot, plan, arrange and deliberately make an effort to organize the object of our photograph. Other times we record what captures our fancy for a moment and move on.

Outdoor dining, Amsterdam





Art Rocks

Art Rocks

Rocks and flowing water are a staple image for the landscape photographer. Photographers seek dramatic boulders, sheer cliffs, sharp edges and texture. “Cotton candy” water blurred into whiteness by a long exposure adds contrast to the drama. There is urgency and energy as the water roars over rocks in a steep canyon.

There is no drama in a shallow, clear creek. The turbulence and noise is now gone and the water has time to relax and smooth itself out and prepare itself for the next waterfall or rapids. This is the place where the stones are placed with purpose and aesthetics by man rather than by the laws of hydraulics and gravity.

It is a quiet place for reflection and contemplation.









Early Morning on the River

Early Morning on the River

The only thing wrong with early morning photography are the words “early” and “morning.” Early morning photography means that you must be awake and en route to your specified location before zero dark thirty. Without sufficient hot caffeinated beverages your mind will be fuzzy and not work properly. The artistic consequences of this lack of chemical assistance are usually not favorable. Then after creating some bad art, you miss breakfast and are exhausted by 2 PM.

As you might surmise, I am adamantly opposed to early morning artistic endeavors. However, the jet lag exception can be invoked (on rare occasions) in order to see if the world actually looks better through the dawn’s golden hour.

The fog burns off in the early morning and the world begins to appear clearly through the mist. Ah, a fitting metaphor for my mental condition at that early hour.











Postcards from the Creative Journey

January 20, 2013

But I Worked So Hard on It...

Photographers often (and wrongly) assume that the amount of effort put into creating a photograph should be appreciated by the viewer. This is not the case. Most folks don't know enough about the fine details of photography to appreciate the effort that may have gone into creating a photograph. They just want to look at the image and be happy. The only people that could possibly be impressed with the amount of effort put into making a photograph are other photographers. They just might endure the impassioned description of your travails in creating a work of art.

The rest of the world just looks at the destination, not the journey. It may not be fair, but that's the way life is sometimes.

The other side of this coin is equally as puzzling. Somewhere in one of my earlier blog posts I write, "it doesn't feel like I did enough work to merit such a nice image." Yes, there are serendipitous times when you, your camera, subject and the light are all magically arranged when you make the photograph. There is no struggle and with very little work you create a masterful photograph. It is $f/8$, $1/60$ and you are there at the perfect time and place.

So there it is. You work hard and nothing comes of it and sometimes good things happen with no effort. I don't have an explanation for it. I just roll with it and try to work my way into the right place at the right time with my camera.





A Quick Stop

A Quick Stop

One of the few rules of Photo Safari is the Quick Stop. The rule is simple. Either participant calls out “Stop.” The driver is obliged to safely bring the vehicle to a halt and inquire about the photographic nature of the stop. Either or both of the participants unlimber the photographic gear and begin photographing the designated place.

Sometimes the other participant is permitted to shake their head in complete amazement about the apparent lack of photographic subject matter in the general vicinity of the stopped vehicle. No verbalizations about the companion’s lack of vision are permitted. (Rolling of eyes and deep sighs are barely tolerated, but allowable.)

Quick stops can have multiple outcomes.

Quick Stops can be short enough to make a quick photographic sketch of the location.

Quick Stops can be long enough to create a small project.

Quick Stops can turn into a multiple day and multiple project location full of photographic subject matter.

You just don’t know what happens until you stop the vehicle and look at the place.

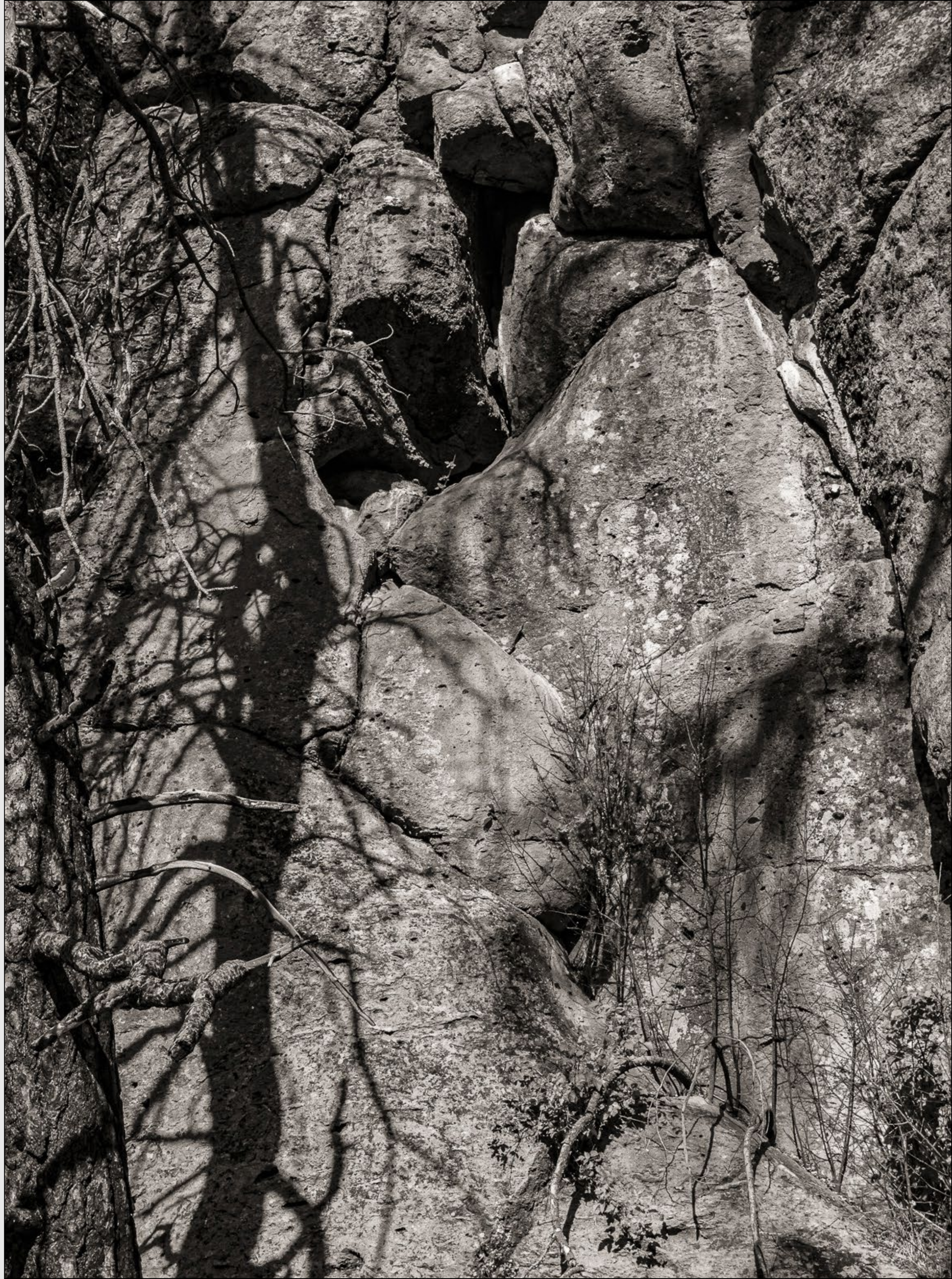


















Age and Context

There are people that hold on to their possessions no matter what. The reasons are never clear because there really is no reason to retain old things when they have lost their value.

If one waits long enough, these possessions regain their value, again. Miraculously old things become regain their value and become prized possessions when their continued survival becomes a window into the past. Then we gather them together and display them for all to see.

Ledger books with flowing script tell a financial story of who bought what and when. We have records of what was purchased in days gone by and we have examples of the common things used at the same time. Alas, we are missing the stories of the people that held on to their possessions.





na Slickers

#2

Long Slickers









A New Neighborhood Friend

Justin's Little League season was canceled this summer, but he kept his team hat. His Dad built a little batting cage in the side yard and we hear the "plonk" sound of his aluminum bat frequently. I'm sure he has won many imaginary World Series Games in his little batting cage.

I wasn't a real good baseball player when I was Justin's age. We had a lot more fun in neighborhood games with ghost runners and automatic outs when we didn't have someone in left field.

I do miss the distinctive crack of a baseball on a wooden bat. It just sounds better than that aluminum "plonk."

My "old" neighborhood friends first appeared in last month's Journal. [Stop by and visit them again.](#)



A Few Closing Words

Art Rocks is truly an En Passant grouping of photographs. We were on our way up one of the many creeks that flow down the Coastal Range to the Oregon Coast looking for dramatic water and rock locations when we came upon this flat spot in the creek. When you see the artistic efforts shown in the photographs you are required to stop and memorialize the location because so much effort was expended creating these rock patterns in the creek. Should you favor the more dramatic in terms of rocks and water, you could visit the ["Jump off Joe"](#) folio to see what it looked like upstream of the Art Rocks.

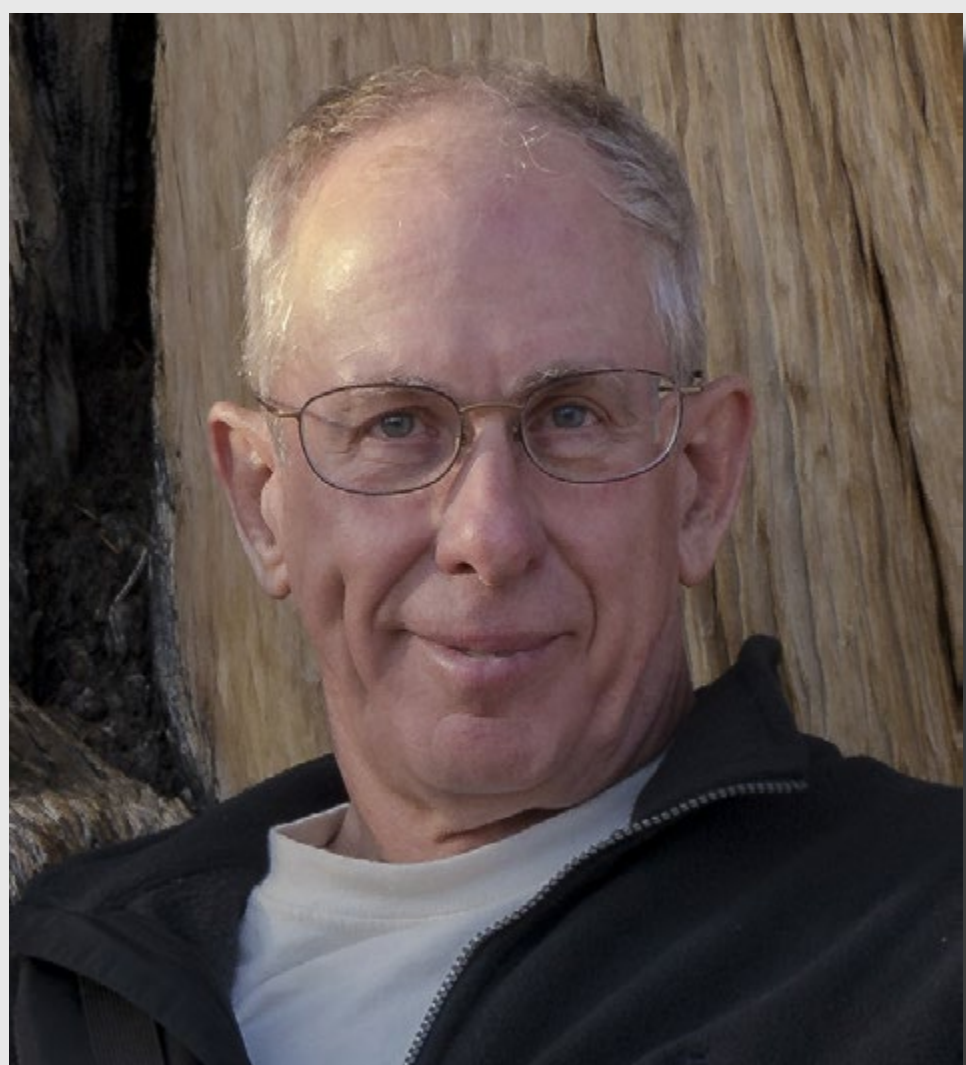
Early Morning on the River is just that. The vantage point for the images is the bow of a River Cruiser one early morning on the Danube. Photographing from the middle of a river is quite different than my usual location on the river bank. It was a refreshing change in point of view. Even if I was up way too early in the morning.

A Quick Stop is one of the little projects from a recent Photo Safari. It is a simple sketch of a little gap between two rock formations. I didn't notice the images were mostly vertical compositions until I selected them for publication.

Age and Context are images from the Rice Museum, in Georgetown, South Carolina. Small town museums are usually a hodge podge of donated or loaned really old things have defied the odds and outlasted their original purpose. The collection and preservation of these old things allow tourists to spend some time wondering how difficult it was to live in the low country of South Carolina two centuries ago.

Front Porch Rocker,
Georgetown, South Carolina





Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last thirty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred juried exhibitions, more than twenty solo exhibitions and have been printed in *LensWork*, *Black & White Photography* (UK) and *F-Stop* Magazines.

His website www.joelipkaphoto.com has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, feature a photograph and a little bit of writing.

His newest blog, *The Daily Photograph*, is simply that. A new and interesting image posted every morning at 8:00 AM.

COLOPHON

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Joe Lipka

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Blog: https://joelipkaphoto.typepad.com/the_daily_photograph/

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