

Peak Digital Imaging Society

History of the Club

The Peak Digital Imaging Society (PDIS) was established in Colorado Springs, November 8, 2000. Co-founders Bill Young and Mark Kirkland, both photographers, pioneered this club.

In August of 2000, Bill was searching for the best digital camera to meet his needs. He walked into Shoemaker's camera store, Colorado Springs, where he was greeted by Mark. Together they tried out many different cameras, practicing various lighting situations with the same shot. Bill remarked: "I bet I am not the only one who wants to learn about different cameras before purchase." After this challenging practice session, Bill purchased a Nikon D-990 camera.

A bond formed between these two photographers, resulting in a camera club with monthly meetings. This friendship began a journey into digital imaging photography, inviting new members to join them along the way. Eventually, two PDIS members were honored as "Colorado Professional of the Year" recipients.

Meetings started in Old Colorado City with a small room located in a bank. Within six months, the group grew from three members to fifty, relocating to various venues until approximately 350 members were on the mailing list – including photographers from Egypt, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and Mexico. Club dues were *never* initiated by leadership teams to pay for speakers or various meeting places. All leaders and participants volunteered their time. This photo club continued to meet through the years, including Zoom support with PDIS President Cas Foste during the Covid-19 pandemic.

PDIS hosted some well-known photographers and speakers, such as John Fielder, George Lepp, Dan Burkholder, David Munch, John Paul Caponigro, Hal Gould, John McClusky, and Jeff Mallo.

Former President Bill Young and former Chairman Mark Kirkland promoted education with seasoned photographers, themed competitions, instructional workshops, and framed photographs shown in galleries. These co-founders were guided by a simple mission: "To interact with others who want to bring joy to their digital imaging experience." Result? Local art galleries, stores, and meeting places were graced with extraordinary fine art by PDIS members.

Because of this balanced approach, PDIS attendees developed their knowledge, skills and understanding within the expanding world of photography - leading to the processes of higher quality digital imaging, editing, and printing. As the years went by, amateur camera buffs emerged into their own specialties as photographers.

Some members sold their artwork, started clubs of their own, established art studios, pursued outdoor adventures, matted and framed their own artwork, built personal websites, created their own careers, and became mentors in leadership positions. For example, PDIS Member Robert Gray served as president of the Pikes Peak Arts Council.

From the beginning of PDIS history, competitions have been held three times a year. Selected judges are invited to critique photo print entries of any size, and volunteer their expertise, interpretations, and time. Their recognition to winners is a highlight for PDIS members.

And, once a year, PDIS members learn how to think like a judge by choosing winners through collaborating and scoring based on photography criteria. Again, recognition is awarded to PDIS members who display exceptional examples of artwork.

This club looks forward to quarterly field trips as ways to practice their skills. Most of these field trips are local, but sometimes extend south to Pueblo or north to Denver. We have enjoyed “shooting” trips to the Paint Mines, Denver Botanic Gardens, Garden of the Gods, Hudson Gardens, Fountain Creek, The Space Foundation HQ Discovery Center, Cherokee Castle, Carnivorous Plants with Jeremy, and the Gabriel Foundation Bird Sanctuary. Just to name a few!

PDIS proudly exhibits a Black and White Show in a local gallery each year. This show, initiated by former President Cas Foste many years ago, continues to be a favorite among our artists. She curated these shows and encouraged photographers to learn specialized techniques of black and white digital images or illustrations. These exhibits have been seen at places like the Red Brick Wall, the Manitou Art Center, Dream Catchers, Plaza of the Rockies, Cottonwood Center for the Arts, and Shutter and Strum.

During the past 25 years, there have been four presidents – Bill Young, Cas Foste, Linda Case, and newly elected Diane Stewart. Each change of leadership brings a new perspective to the club, while maintaining the original mission and values of the founders. Currently, the club meets at Library 21C for monthly meetings, held on 4TH Thursdays, Colorado Springs, CO.

PDIS history would not be complete without noting our annual Community Outreach Program: “The Children’s Library Project.” Members mount and donate approximately 100 prints in June and display them at Library 21C - Children’s Library - during July and August. These prints are later donated to Hope & Home, a local children’s foster care service. This program was initiated in 2023, by Linda Case. Academy Art & Frame Company sponsors this project.

Our PDIS Communications Officer Larry McGough designed our first website and established a rhythm of information. Communications IT Officer Brenda Herzinger is currently reconstructing a new website and will send out newsletters, along with flyers as reminders for meetings and field trips. Additional resources are often added to the PDIS website in preparation for our educational programs and special speakers.

PDIS continues to welcome new digital imaging photography artists -- from amateurs to experienced photographers and illustrators. Contact Us through Academy Art & Frame Co.

Original Interview given by PDIS Co-Founder Bill Young.

Interview also given by Cas Foste, former PDIS President

Written & updated by Linda C Case, former PDIS President [January 21, 2025]