

Publisher's Commentary - NPN's 5th Anniversary

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With the approach of our 5th anniversary of being online, I have been reflecting on the qualities that have enabled NPN to continue to flourish.

Of course, from my perspective, the first thing that comes to mind is my continued love and dedication to what all intents and purposes is a fourth child in the Erhardt family. Like the rest of my family members, NPN is on my mind 24-7. It has become so much a part of my daily routine that when I need to travel with my "real job" or on those rare occasions Donna and I are able to get away for a few days, the laptop computer always accompanies me and the prime requirement for the hotel at which I (we) will be staying is high-speed Internet access.

Through the support of our paid members and those who make Gift Shoppe purchases, we are very fortunate to have the benefit of working capital. Sure, it would be easy to stick it all in our pockets and just run NPN into the ground for our own personal gain, but like a child, investing in its future is something we do without reservation. Over the last few years, investing in proprietary software for the image critique forums and the hugely successful [PhotoPortfolios](#) website has been akin to paying for a college education. Other tangible investments, such as our dedicated servers have been worth the expense as well. More recently, the support of our paying members, Gift Shoppe patrons and site sponsors has enabled us to attract and retain the contributions of talented full time professionals. This is something I have long envisioned doing – raising the quality of our editorial content to rival that of any printed photography publication. It's very gratifying to have finally achieved that goal.

No discussion of NPN's success would be complete without a mention of its most important aspect – you! Through the tireless efforts of our forum moderators, and the passion and mutual respect of our members and forum participants, our photo galleries and discussion forums remain a benchmark of educational opportunity focused exclusively on the art and technique of nature photography. Nature photography enthusiasts from many different countries and cultures visit NPN not only to enjoy our elegant presentation of editorial and photography, but also as a refuge from the grating "background noise" of flaming and public discussion of one's religious and political views found on other sites. Long gone are the days of blatant commercialism and gratuitous self-promotion when seemingly every image posted was an advertisement for a workshop. Cliques have given way to open mindedness, acceptance and appreciation of the many different styles, skill levels and nature photography genres represented in the NPN galleries. While "the administration" can post the guidelines and set the tone, it's our members and participants who have endeared the NPN galleries and forums with these finer qualities of human interaction we all now enjoy - regardless of our race, religion, gender or political beliefs.

Without a doubt, NPN has grown and matured since it made its Internet debut in April of 2000. Like raising a child, it has not always been easy. But as I sit here writing this on the eve of NPN's 5th anniversary, I look forward to "our child's" continued growth and future achievements. My heart-felt thanks to all of you for helping to make it so!

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Comments on NPN nature and wildlife photography articles? Send them to the [editor](#).