

## MY PHOTOGRAPHY LIFE A New Life in Arizona Part 12

### Custodian Job at Church

In January of 2020 I was still recovering from my time spent at the hospital. I had nurses, physical therapists, and a doctor come over to visit me for most of the month of January. At the end of January, I started going back to church and in the month of January I joined Trinity Bible Church. Our church had a special meeting at the end of the month of January honoring the new members. This special meeting was called a “Pulse Meeting.” I was one of those new members. In this meeting they went over the finances of the church and expressed their need for someone to work in the church custodian department. That picked my interest since I would need a job now. I asked Mike Darus about the job. At the beginning of February, I had an interview with Mike Darus and he offered me the job.

I started the job February 5, 2020. By now my social security was coming in so I would have two incomes. The job at church would be for 25 hours a week. I work from 7AM to 12 Noon Monday through Friday. I would establish a friendship with the other custodians, and I would see and get to know the office staff and the pastors. I still work there to this day. It is nice to come to work and talk about theology. Some of the fellow workers that were working with me were young seminary students. It was exciting to get to know them.



### New Photography Equipment

At the end of February Jena Martinez was having a birthday party. She called me at the beginning of February when I had just got my new job and asked me if I could take pictures for her birthday party. I told her I wouldn't be able to because I didn't have an electronic flash unit. It was stolen when I first moved to Arizona. She asked me how much one cost. I had my eyes on an inexpensive Yongnuo YN560 IV which was an inexpensive flash made in China, it was completely manual, that is what kept its cost down. It was recommended by many photographers on YouTube. Ruben wrote out a check for the money. I bought it from B&H, and I showed up February 29<sup>th</sup> to photograph Jena's birthday party. I like this flash and have bought more. Later I would buy a Yongnuo TTL flash that worked with my camera with automatic exposure. I now have three of these Yongnuo flashes.

In 2020 we started hearing about Covid-19, a disease that started in China and was starting to affect the whole world. The government gave us a stimulus check at this time to help due to the pandemic. Since I was now working, I decided to buy the Nikkor 60mm f/2.8 macro lens that was stolen from me when I first moved to Arizona. I bought it from B&H. It was one of my favorite lenses. I got a surprise out of nowhere when Pat McFarland, my old high school photography friend told me he was getting rid of his Nikon D70 camera body and asked me if I would like to have it.



He sent it to me with no charge and even paid for the postage. So, I had this classical digital camera to back up my Nikon D90 that was stolen. The Nikon D70 was one of the first affordable digital SLR cameras. It came out in 2004. It was under \$1000 for the camera body. I still have this camera. It has quite a history behind it.



### **Anarchy and Covid-19**

Late in the month of May 2020, Covid-19 and total anarchy was happening in the United States. It started where I moved from in Minneapolis. A policeman killed a black man while arresting him. The killing was not justified, and it created a mass riot in Minneapolis. Much of Minneapolis was burned down, looted, and you had violence in the streets and violence against the police. Soon Minneapolis wanted to eliminate the police force. This was happening along with Covid-19. It created all kinds of riots throughout the country. Arizona remained safe during this time. I was now very glad I no longer lived in Minneapolis.

### **Joining the Professional Photographers of America**

In the month of June, I re-joined the Professional Photographers of America (PP of A). I used to be a member in my early days as a photographer. I first joined the PP of A in 1972. I think sometime in the 1980s I might have canceled my membership. The reason I joined the PPA now is because I heard they offer to members a group insurance for photo equipment which was coverage up to \$15,000 and would also offer extended coverage for members who needed more coverage. I also get a monthly magazine from them called the *Professional Photographer*. The PPA is mostly a portrait and wedding photography organization but has something for every photographer.

### **Prescott, Arizona**

At church I joined a singles group with older singles. In September 2020 they were planning a trip to Prescott, Arizona. I went with them and got some pictures from a hike we went on and we went downtown. Prescott has a sign when you enter downtown that says, "Everybody's Hometown." There is a section downtown known as "Whiskey Row." They have a beautiful courthouse I photographed. The city of Prescott was founded in 1864 and was founded as the territorial capital of Arizona. At this time,



I started to upload stock photos to Adobe Stock, Shutterstock, and Dreamstime. I have been receiving payment from these agencies for the use of my photos. In September our singles group

went to Flagstaff. When I got there, I found out I had a defective SD card. So that year I didn't get any photos of Flagstaff.

### **New Computer**

In September of 2020 it was time to get a new computer. My old computer was getting slow. I got a Dell computer which Brian Zeug, a friend back in Minnesota an IT guy helped me purchase and he helped set it up for me when it came. I updated the computer with all the new software. I got the new Microsoft office package and updated Photoshop. I also bought a new black monotone Laser printer by Brother. I wanted to stop spending all that money on ink, so I bought a laser printer.



Since my Christian website, mywordswritten.org wasn't being looked at that much. I decided not to resubscribe to Yahoo for the hosting service. Some Christians in my church asked me why I was paying all that money for a website if nobody was going there. In November I cancelled mywordswritten.org.

In August I had to replace my external drive on my computer. I went to Best Buy and bought a Western Digital Passport which holds 2 TB of data. So now my photos are protected again. It took a long time to download my files from Carbonite.

### **I met a new Photographer.**

In the month of December 2020, at a men's church breakfast I met Eric Racz, who



was a new member of our church. I found out he was also a photographer, so we got to know each other better. We went out together to the desert to photograph. We did some hiking and climbing. We went out to the Phoenix Mountains Preserve. He visited my apartment, and I visited his. He has a pretty wife and two children. Eric had also shown me a Microsoft program called OneNote. He showed me how he made notes in it for his plans in photography. I use OneNote now. Erik is also a chef and



cooks for us at church. His camera system is the Olympus four thirds mirrorless system. Eric also has a full frame mirrorless Canon system now.

### **The Year 2021**

In January of 2021 I got good news from the doctors, they said my liver is now fully functional. On February 17 a sad day for me I found out Rush Limbaugh died of lung cancer. His wife gave an address over the radio. After Rush Limbaugh's death I decided not to listen to talk radio

anymore. I used to listen also to Sean Hanity and Mark Levin. Listening to talk radio used to get me so upset about what was going on in our country. I just felt it was best to move into other things in life. As a Christian I must remember I am not of this world. My kingdom is in heaven. If the liberals want to destroy this county let them; I don't care anymore, but I will vote.

### **Phoenix Valley Road Trips**

In May of 2021 Mike Orlando from my church who does package deliveries said he would show me some interesting spots in the Phoenix valley. He drove me to Carefree, Fountain Hills, Tempe, and we went to the Hole in the Rock which is between Phoenix and Tempe. I took



***Sundial at Carefree Desert Garden***

photos of these areas and I have uploaded them to my stock photo agencies, and I have made sales already.

We went to the Carefree Desert Gardens in Carefree. It is an interesting desert biological garden with a fountain and has one of the largest sun dials in the world. I managed to get the whole sun dial in with my fisheye lens which covers 180-degree view. See photo.



***World's Famous Fountain at Fountain Hills***

Fountain Hills is famous for their fountain. This fountain can shoot as high as 560 feet. Tempe is a college town and suburb of Phoenix. I took a photo of the Tempe Skyline from Mill Avenue Bridge on the man-made Tempe town Lake. Construction of the lake began in 1997 and the water started to fill in June of 1999 from the Colorado River through a series of canals.

Hole in the Rock is an interesting geological formation located between Phoenix and Tempe. You can see this formation at Papago Park in Phoenix.



***Tempe Skyline from Mill Avenue Bridge on Tempe Town Lake***

This closes out the year 2021 for my photography.



***Hole in the Rock at Papago Park Phoenix, Arizona***

## Arizona Trips in 2022

In January of 2022 I talked to Buckey McChesney who I work with at Trinity Bible Church about desert scenes in Arizona. He suggested we could drive to South Mountain in Phoenix. We drove in his Toyota Highlander up the mountain. It was very warm that day in the afternoon even in January. I'm not sure I even wore a jacket. Buckey was in a short sleeve shirt. Buckey likes to travel, and he knows a lot about Arizona and its history. So, he will be my guide in touring the state of Arizona. I got a great photo at the top of the mountain as you see here.



Jumping to July Allan Solheim and his wife Nancy who leads our singles group planned a special event for the men. Allen drove us to Flagstaff to see the Lowell Observatory. I like space so I had to go and obviously I took photos. The observatory is like a museum which is loaded with vintage astronomical telescopes and other tools of the trade. It was cloudy the night we went up to the observatory, so we did not look through the big telescopes. But I got photos all throughout the buildings. My favorite photo was the picture I took of the famous 24-inch Clark refracting telescope that Mr. Lowell bought. With that telescope he studied Mars and fantasized about the world of an entire civilization who used a system of canals for irrigation. For the singles group I produced a power point slide presentation on the Lowell Observatory.



In September our singles group decided on a trip to Jerome, Arizona. Jerome is an old mining town which is promoted as a haunted ghost town. There is no mining now, but the town has a historical museum and several gift shops and restaurants and of course the Haunted Hotel with two skeletons in front to welcome you. I took pictures in the many gift shops, the museum and on the street of the small town. In Jerome I found a rock shop. I bought some

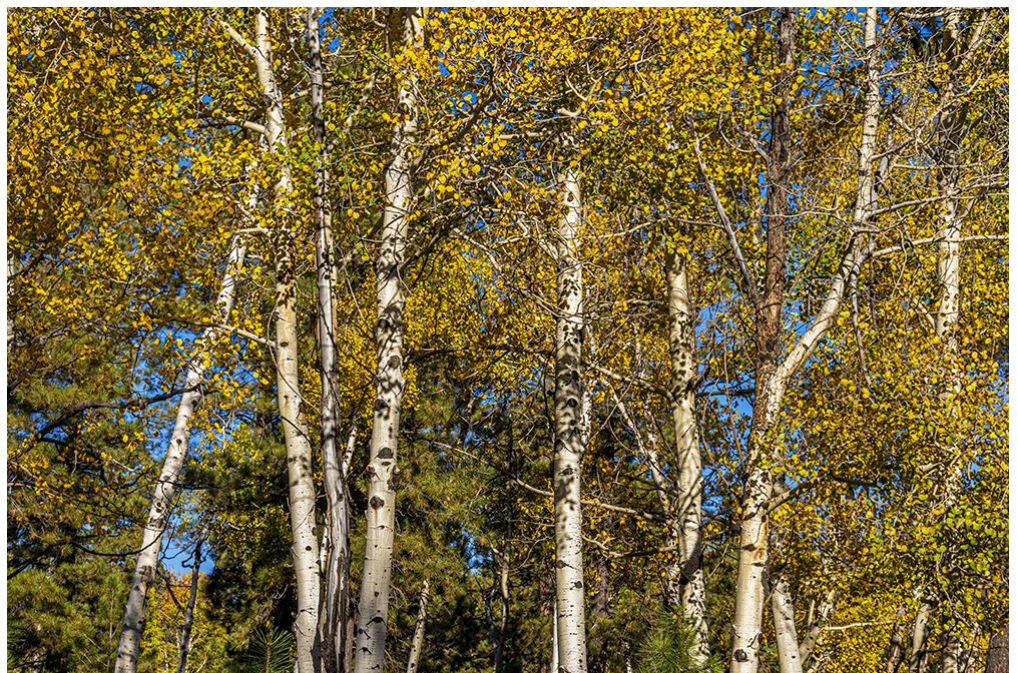


Chalcopyrite, Pink Tourmaline, white quartz geode, and a small meteorite. Here are a couple of photos I took at Jerome.

In October of 2022 I was able to talk Buckey into a trip to the Grand Canyon. This was one of the best trips I was ever on. We had a good hot lunch at the park too. We walked near the Mather Point on the South Rim. The Grand Canyon is so big. Below is a photo which I tried to show the vastness of the canyon. I photographed this image with my Tamron 10-24mm f/3.5 – f/4.5 ultra-wide zoom lens. I used a polarizing filter to enhance the sky and color.



On our way back to Phoenix Buckey stopped just outside of Flagstaff so we could get some fall colors of the yellow aspens. I like the white bark of the trees. It was a beautiful day for October. It was not too cold. It was quite warm for October in the Grand Canyon and even by Flagstaff.



## Buying More Photographic Equipment



In the last few years from 2020 to 2022 I decided to buy some photo equipment from B & H. I always wanted a fisheye lens. I like creative artistic photography, so I bought an Opteka 6.5mm f/3.5 fisheye lens. It is fun to play with. I like still life photography, so I decided to buy some more speed lights. I bought a Yongnuo YN968N TTL flash. My Nikon TTL flash was stolen when I moved here. I also bought another Yongnuo



YN560-IV manual speedlight. I bought the radio controller for my Yongnuo units



too. I also purchased a Sekonic L-308X-U flash meter. I bought three 6-foot light stands and three adjustable umbrella mounts, three 32" umbrellas, and a background light stand. For artistic creative flash I bought me a Rogue grid and filter attachment for my flashes. I bought a nice bag to keep my light stands in. So, I am all set up with some lights to start doing still life photography. I plan to do more of that.



We got another stimulus from the government, and I was thinking of buying a new Nikon D7500 camera that would be a good match with my D7200. I could use the older camera as a backup for my new D7500.



However, I am very glad I did not do that for two reasons. My teeth were giving me some painful problems, so I went to the dentist and after being examined I needed \$1600 for my first visit. There went my new camera. I found out later from B & H that the new Nikon D7500 does not have as large files as my D7200, but it does have 4K video. The Nikon D7500 disappointed me. In the future if I want to get another camera body, I will buy a used Nikon D7200.



One major evolution in the camera industry is the emergence of the “mirrorless” camera design. It is the only camera design that has been developed in the digital era in photography. In this design you view the image that goes directly to the sensor, and you need no mirror and prism like in a digital single lens reflex (DSLR) camera. All camera manufacturers have stopped making DSLRs. Many photographers are ditching their DSLR cameras and buying all new mirrorless cameras. The lenses that mount on these new mirrorless cameras must have a different lens mount. So, the photographers must sell all their old lenses too. I have about a half a dozen lenses for my Nikon DSLR and I would have to get rid of my lenses besides my Nikon DSLR camera. I will stick with what I have. If I need more lenses or another camera body, I will buy used ones.

**The End of Part 12**  
**A New Life in Arizona**