



# CNPA 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

*We keep on topping our wonderful past experiences...there's plenty more to come!*

## CNPA's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Presentation Recap by David Hartfield

For the ones that were unable to attend the annual meeting I would like to recap the CNPA'S 20th anniversary presentation.

For me it was a tremendous pleasure to honor Tom Vargo for being the founding father of CNPA. Tom Vargo was a tremendous photographer, teacher and storyteller. Tom was mentored by photographer Larry West. Some of you may not know Larry, but he also mentored John Shaw. Tom was a tremendous technician. He was patient and kind and was always willing to share his photography with others. He had tremendous respect for the flora and fauna with which he shares this marvelous world. Tom was also a great storyteller. He would often entertain us with various stories like the "panhandling deer" and the "\$6,000 lens verses a better van". I retold these two stories at the annual meeting. And since you were not there, and have no proof to the contrary, I must tell you that they were great stories.

In the early 1990s Tom ran workshops at various state parks throughout North Carolina and South Carolina. After a few of these workshops, it became apparent that most of the people taking these workshops were the same people that took previous workshops. They shared a love of nature photography and loved talking about equipment, techniques, and favorite shooting locations. They also shared concerns of the fragile and diverse ecosystems within the Carolinas. From this core group of photographers CNPA was born.

Some of the founding members were Tom Vargo, Karen Beshears, Don Wacker, David Hartfield, Dave Strine, Bruce and Lille Plumer, Cherri Pittillo, Valerie Sammons, and Jerry Burkard.

From the very inception the core values of CNPA has not changed. They are: *To promote nature photography in the Carolinas; To help conserve and preserve the diverse natural ecosystems in these areas; and To educate others interested in nature photography.*

CNPA's logo, the Oconee bell, was selected because it is an endangered plant that exists in both North Carolina and South Carolina. It was first drawn by Jerry Burkard's son Ian when he was just 13 years old. Ian is now a renowned animator with movie credits of *Ice Age*, *Ice Age II*, *Horton Hears a Who!*, and *Robots*.



Some of the past CNPA presidents who attended the 2012 Annual Meeting:

Don Wacker (also standing in for Tom Vargo), Doug Holstein, Carol Wade, Don Brown, Don Wuori, Noel Bergman and David Hartfield.



Each past president was introduced. The list of some of their accomplishments were read and they were given opportunity to speak. *The genealogy of CNPA Presidents are 1<sup>st</sup> Karen Beshears, 2<sup>nd</sup> Don Wacker, 3<sup>rd</sup> David Hartfield, 4<sup>th</sup> Don Wuori, 5<sup>th</sup> Bill Shackelford, 6<sup>th</sup> Noel Bergman, 7<sup>th</sup> Carol Wade, 8<sup>th</sup> Doug Holstein, and 9<sup>th</sup> Don Brown.* It was great to hear each one of their perspectives and funny stories from when they were president and to hear the different things that have changed, grown, and matured over time. All the past presidents were in attendance except Karen and Bill.

I then presented the 2012 Founders Award to Don Wacker, receiving the award on behalf of Tom Vargo. The inscription on the award reads as follows:

### 2012 FOUNDERS AWARD

Presented to:

**Tom Vargo**

*On behalf of the*

*Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association*

*We thank you for your efforts to record nature's beauty,  
encourage others to do the same*

*and to instill the seeds to begin an organization that has  
brought so much thought, friendship and joy to so many  
and at the same time sought to protect the plants, animals  
and the environment that we all hold so dear.*

The presentation was ended with the following quote: The Spirit of CNPA Lives Through You.

Even though the faces and the technology have changed, the spirit of CNPA continues. What a wonderful organization, that through the hard work of so many, continues to get better and better. I applaud not only the work of the founders, but everyone who has continued to strive to make this an outstanding organization. It's not just a club where skills and knowledge are acquired, but also a place where friendships and memories are made.