



# PAA News and Updates

## Photographic Alliance of America (PAA)

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PAA Website: [pausa.org](http://pausa.org)

### FIAP News Includes PAA Member Photo Recommendations

The quarterly FIAP News includes mini articles that recommend a setting someplace in the world that provides photographic opportunities. Each issue of the FIAP News since August 2021 has included a mini article by a PAA member sharing a photo opportunity location in the USA. Four of these articles were described in the May 2022 PAA article, three were included in the April 2023 PAA article, three were included in the January 2024 PAA article, and three were in the March 2026 PAA article in the *PSA Journal*.

In the May 2025 issue of the FIAP News **Larry Tho Dao, PPSA, EFIAP/s**, of Long Beach, CA, explored photographing Slab City, near the Salton Sea in California. The August 2025 issue included an article by **John Andrew Hughes, FPSA, PPSA, AFIAP, SSPAA**, of Sun Valley, NV, where he described the photography opportunities around Avalon Harbor, Catalina Island, off Long Beach, California. **Sharon Prislipsky, APSA, EPSA, AFIAP**, of Hot Springs Village, AR, described photographing Chicago, IL, in the November 2025 FIAP News.

Past issues of the FIAP News are linked from the FIAP web site at: [fiap.net/en/fiap-news](http://fiap.net/en/fiap-news) and previous PAA member recommendation articles are in the first gallery on the PAA website at: [pausa.org/fiap-news](http://pausa.org/fiap-news).

For information regarding the Photographic Alliance of America (PAA): [pausa.org](http://pausa.org)

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### RECOMMENDATIONS Avalon Harbor, Catalina Island, California, USA

By John Andrew Hughes, AFIAP, FPSA, PPSA

Just a short distance from the coastal town of Long Beach, California, lies the photogenic island of Catalina. The ferry ride across has opportunities for dolphin or whale sightings, depending on the time of year. Coastal sea birds, harbor seals and other sea life are abundant.

Catalina has been occupied for the past 7000 years, firstly by the Pimungane Native American tribe, then the Spanish Empire, then Mexico, and finally the United States of America. It went through several private ownership changes until the chewing gum entrepreneur William Wrigley Jr. purchased nearly every share of the Catalina Island Company, becoming the majority owner in 1919.



Avalon Harbor Nighttime

Catalina's city of Avalon is the only town on the island and has a picturesque Pacific ocean waterfront harbor. The valley has traditional single story houses, painted in bright seaside colors. The harbor is dominated by a green pleasure pier the locals call 'Green Dock'. Attractions include Descanso Beach, oceanfront restaurants, glass-bottom boat and submarine rides, and the Catalina Casino.

Wrigley invested millions of dollars to turn Avalon into a playground for the rich and famous. He called it "A playground for all". In the 1930s, 40s and 50s it was a hot location for Hollywood stars.



Avalon Yacht Club

The Catalina Casino is not a Casino in the modern sense as it has never been a place for gambling. Casino means Gathering Place! It houses the largest circular ballroom in the world, with a spectacular 50 foot tall ornate ceiling. Tours of the Casino are available showing off the spectacular architecture of the building adorned with massive murals at the entrance and in the movie palace. The magnificent original foyer has gorgeous hardwood panels and historic furniture. There are original movie projectors and remnants of the many Hollywood movies filmed on the island.

Most photographic opportunities are within easy walking distance, or you can rent a golf cart or bicycle. The ocean water along the boardwalks is crystal clear. Bright orange Garibaldi fish can be seen in their hundreds and beautiful boats can be seen at their moorings. Inner island tours are available to see the lush green landscape, spectacular views from the top of the island and the chance to spot wild Buffalo and Deer on the slopes and valleys.

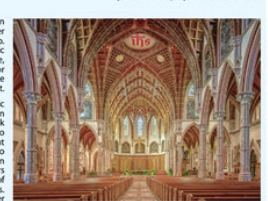
Adventure awaits visitors, such as camping, zip-lining, island tours, hiking, music, and of course photography.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

### Chicago, Illinois, USA

By Sharon Prislipsky, AFIAP, APSA, EPSA

There is a good reason why photographers from all over the world are drawn to Chicago. Whether your photographic interests lean to architecture, cityscapes, flora and fauna, zoo or street photography, there will be something to capture your interest.



Our Redeemer Cathedral

An abundance of iconic images such as Cloud Gate in Millennium Park or the riverwalk await you, but don't forget to explore the streets looking for what Henri Cartier Bresson referred to as "the decisive moment." You can shoot up at towering skyscrapers or shoot down from the tops of tall buildings or parking structures. Then you might explore Lower Wacker Drive which runs below the city's main streets.

The Chicago Botanical Garden offers opportunities for close-up or macro images, vistas and more intimate landscapes. Chicago also includes twenty-eight miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and thirty-three beaches, as well as the Brookfield Zoo and the Shedd Aquarium. For street photographers Chicago's Magnificent Mile stretches from the Chicago River to the north side.

Chicago boasts beautiful historic churches, including Holy Name Cathedral and North Presbyterian. It is recommended that you call ahead to arrange your photographic visit at a time that will not interfere with regular church services or events. These interiors are often dim, so it is best to have a camera with high ISO capabilities. Use a wide-angle lens, or even better, a tilt-shift lens to capture the magnificence of these structures. A small donation would also be advisable.

Chicago can be photographed at any time of the day day light. It is walkable and safer than many other cities. At night it is best, however, to stick to the Riverwalk, the Magnificent Mile and the Loop which are always packed with people.

Chicago has two airports, O'Hare and Midway. It is easy to catch a taxi, or a rideshare into the city. If you prefer, take the CTA train from the airport to downtown, a forty-five minute trip. There are numerous hotels to choose from in downtown Chicago, but regardless of where you choose to stay, be certain to visit the Hilton, formerly known as the Palmer House. This is one of the most historic hotels in the US and has many unique architectural features as a strong lobby.

Cloud Gate

If you are looking for a photo travel destination with a lot to offer, Chicago can't be beat.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

### Slab City, California, USA Where Discarded Material is Recycled as Art

By Larry Tho Dao, EFIAP/s

Slab City is an unincorporated, off-the-grid alternative lifestyle community consisting largely of snowbirds (people who migrated from northern states during winter months) in the Salton (a rift valley) area of the Sonoran Desert, in southeastern California. Its name comes from the concrete slabs that remain after the World War II USA Marine Corps Dunlap Training Camp was torn down. Slab City is near the east shore of the Salton Sea and southeast of the Salton Sea town of Bombay Beach, an area that attracts tourists, photographers, and contemporary and abstract artists.



East Jesus Multi-Colored Building

The entrance to Slab City is easily recognized by Salvation Mountain which was the idea of Slab City resident Leonard Knight who spent his lifetime building and decorating the God Is Love Mountain. The mountain is 50 feet (15 meters) high and 150 feet (46 meters) wide and was made of clay, paint, and donated objects from the surrounding neighborhood. Salvation Mountain is not a religious place as its name might suggest. It is an artwork made from rusted frames, discarded materials, things that one can find to reuse or recycle. It's a message to tell people to imagine the world without waste. In 2002, Salvation Mountain was named a Congressional National Folk-Art Treasure.



Salvation Mountain

East Jesus is an experimental and habitable art installation located in the Slab City area. There is no religious connotation in the name East Jesus, it is a popular expression for a place in the middle of nowhere beyond the edge of service. The facility operates with no municipal utilities. East Jesus features a variety of experimental art, such as live events, performance art, music, photography, and most prominently sculptures. Works are continually added, and degrade quickly in the desert climate, despite the presence of caretakers. One volunteer referred to it, and Slab City as a whole, as having a 'salvage punk' character. East Jesus pieces are described as decaying, or growing, but always in a state of transformation, unlike traditional galleries, due both to the intense climate, and the thousands of contributing artists who continually add to the installation. Live-in staff give free tours and host visiting artists and overnight guests. The locals live on donations from tourists. It's easy to say that hundreds of people visit this area daily to see and photograph the artists' work.