

Through Their Lens

A Series of Interviews with Active Grand Photos Volunteers

Barbara (Brady) Conn



An experienced and creative photographer, Brady Conn was born and raised in New Jersey. At Grand Photos she is an education class instructor, leads the Seekers & Sojourners special interest group, contributes her creative talent to curating images for the Studio gallery and occasionally leads Club photoshoots to interesting places in Arizona.

When did your interest in photography begin? I'm sure it began with birds. At 10 years old I was utterly passionate about watching them. My best friend was my binoculars. They cropped my view to just what I needed to see: those colorful, identity markings. That binocular view was a beautiful, thrilling world I could enter at will. I absolutely loved going there. One small step to camera viewfinders is all it took to commit me to photography for life.

How did you arrive at Grand? After 20 years of enjoying my small business, *Yes! Photography*, I began to feel the digital tsunami approaching. Suddenly everyone was a photographer. When disposable cameras and point and shooters began to replace professional wedding photographers, I realized it was time to move on, however, I did not expect to actually move. In 2009 a new friend introduced me to Sun City Grand and the photo club. A year later I settled into my Surprise home and joined the photo club community. Both were wonderful choices.

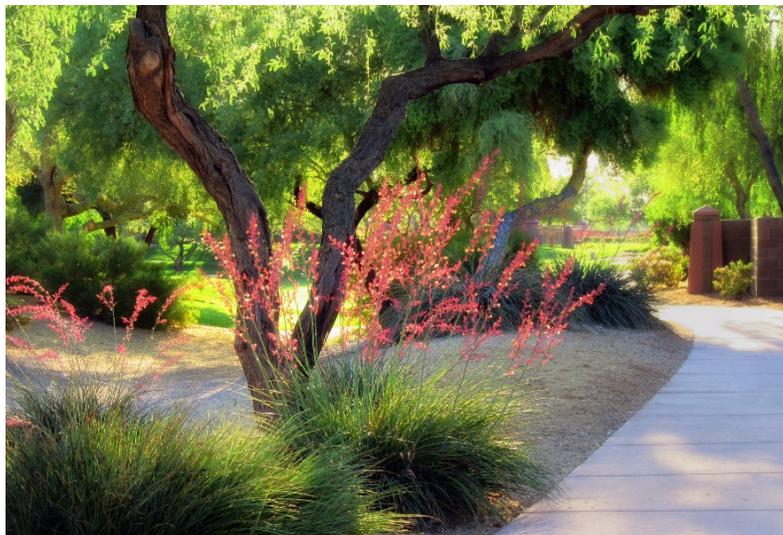
What do you most enjoy about Grand Photos? I especially like the way sharing has become so central to Grand Photos. Years ago, we saw members' photographs only twice a year at competition shows and a few monthly at the Creative Eye SIG. Today we share and celebrate our images everywhere and often: all over the Grand Photos website and Facebook page, in SIGs and classes, in Studio showcases and the digital darkroom, at photo shoot reviews, and now at membership gatherings as well. Everything from apps to software tricks is also shared. All of this delights me.



How did you find yourself leading the Special Interest Group (SIG), Seekers and Sojourners? A decade ago, huge SLR cameras prevailed at the photo club. Newer members with "point and shoot" cameras spoke of feeling welcome but intimidated. To help them gain skill and confidence, I began offering short shoots, local photo trips to practice the basics then share lunch and images together. That idea morphed into Beginners, a misnomer, until "Seekers & Sojourners" (aka S&S) better defined the monthly SIG meetings. No matter their skill level or camera type, S&S participants have always improved their photography by sharing topic-related

images, knowledge and kindly comments. Sojourns, local photo shoots, and lunches together were ever popular, too. Covid, of course, changed everything. But we Zoomed together from near and far to enjoy sharing images and seeing each other. In the Studio next fall, Pam Careau will be leading S&S to yet another exciting chapter of growth. I'll be an avid participant, for sure.

What is it about photography that has maintained your interest over so many years? Photography has



always offered me playful, creative ways to approach and celebrate beauty. Even when photography as business skewed my work/play ratio to 80/20, my love of that magical viewfinder world never faltered. Given Grand, Grand Photos and my community of friends here, my ratio's back to 20/80 for good. Once again, my inner child is alive, well and thrilled.

What are your favorite things to photograph?

Whatever's in my view usually becomes my new "favorite thing" to photograph. I've always believed the extraordinary resides in the ordinary. Light draws my eye to whatever it falls on, be that a face, a scene or a doorknob. That

said, I do particularly enjoy photographing bright color, abstracts, lines and angles especially in urban settings, as well as shadows and patterns on anything. Giving images a painterly look in camera or in post-processing also greatly appeals. I think I'm just a generalist in love with light.

