



FACES IN THE CROWD

Local woman embodies free spirit

By VIVIAN VOLIRAKIS CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

June 1, 2009, 3:45PM

Photographer and contemplative psychotherapist Heidi Straube views her world with a tender heart through the lens of a camera.

“We yearn for the taste of the sacred, and through our cameras discover it, the world, and ourselves,” Straube said.

Straube’s career as a photographer and life counselor allows her to practice her passion and capture beautiful moments frozen in time. Throughout Straube’s career she has reached out to her clients not only by capturing photos of them but giving life to photos and learning the meaning of life through photography.

Not only is Straube a photographer but she also teaches essential skills needed for a more enjoyable life. She also teaches methods to help people cope with life’s toughest challenges through photography.

She offers several classes, one in particular is a class called “The Inner Path of Photography.” It is for amateurs as well as skilled photographers and teaches students about the intuitive, mystical part of shooting photographs.

Straube also teaches, “You are the Artist of your Life.”

It was created for teens “to explore their life goals and overcome barriers through photography, contemplation, and life direction techniques,” said Straube.

“Honoring inner, creating outer, photography from the soul,” is Straube’s motto. “As a photographer, I work from the soul. I connect with the essence of my subjects, consciously seeking and recognizing the inner spirit. I then honor and express their beauty and life through light, expression, and form,” said Straube.

She said the photographs you love the most are not because of the latest and most updated equipment or technique. You love them because they inspire you.

“A photo you feel strong love for allows you to see, feel, and remember pieces of your life that are fulfilling, and capture a moment

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that can be remembered forever,” she says.

Straube has only been practicing her passion for about 10 years. She shares her interest in photography with her love of helping others.

With 20 years experience in counseling and corporate consulting, Straube assists people in making life changes and transitions by honoring the deeper, spiritual self.

Straube, 56, has an extensive resume including an masters of education in counseling psychology from the University of Houston, and a bachelors of arts in human relations and counseling from the University of Massachusetts.

Straube has showcased her work at The International Photography Expositions, Recontres International de la Photographie 2001, Aix-en-Provence, France, and FotoFest 2000, Houston, as well as local Houston venues.

Her specialty is in fine art black and white, natural light portraits. She creates personal memento books which combine pictures, thoughts, and writing of family members.

Straube is working on a photographic project reflecting the mystical, magical

character of Galveston beaches and the people who enjoy them.

Shooting many of the pictures on foggy days, she captures a perspective of Galveston that many have never experienced.

“I Dream of Galveston’ is the working title for my project,” said Straube, “I titled it originally because being there and shooting felt like a dream. Since Hurricane Ike, the dream has been to see Galveston beaches return, and happily my pictures are now capturing people returning and loving them still.”

In June 2004, she sold her home in the Montrose, put all of her belongings in storage and set out to create a life that included the most important things to her: photography and soul-searching. She traveled solo on a trip to Greece to explore and create a portfolio of photographs.

When Straube returned to Houston, she became a house sitter for Houstonians and afterwards in Santa Fe, N.M.

She has been back in the Houston-Galveston area now for three years.

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“Of course, I’m always ready for the next adventure,” Straube said. “As a photographer, I’ve learned not to stress out when the original idea for a photo shoot isn’t attainable. I stay flexible, look for other opportunities, and reassure my clients that no matter what, we’ll get something they like. I enjoy the adventure of the unknown, and hold the positive expectation that the outcome will be good and reflect the spirit intended. And marvelous things happen.”

Volirakis is a journalism student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

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