Wandering Eyes

The winners of our annual competition

In 2011, one of the judges of our photo contest, professional photographer Steve Wewerka, started a project, in which he took at least one photo a day with his iPhone instead of his fancier SLR camera. The idea was to challenge himself to see and capture the amazing images around him every day, whether at home or on the road. He called it “Wandering i.”

Clearly Wewerka isn’t the only one with wandering eyes. As you’ll see below, many physicians and medical students are wandering the world with camera in hand and eyes wide open, snapping photos along the way. Yet as student photographer Kristin Comstock exemplifies, exotic travel isn’t a necessary ingredient of a good photograph. She snapped her second-place-winning photo in Granite Falls, Minnesota, after a day of work.

This year, nearly 30 medical students, residents and practicing physicians submitted some of what their wandering eyes captured to our annual photo contest. Thanks to all who took the time to share their beautiful images with us. And thanks to Wewerka and Kathy Forss, Minnesota Medicine’s art director, who judged them.

Note: The winning photos will be on display at the MMA’s Annual Conference September 19-20.

PHYSICIAN

First place

Her Kitchen

PHOTOGRAPHER: Alex Sneiders, M.D., urologist, Mayo Clinic Health System, Owatonna and Faribault

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO: While on a recent trip to Havana, Cuba, I was invited into this lady’s apartment. She was very gracious with her time and allowed me to shoot a series of portraits. This one best captures the clean, inviting atmosphere and her openness. It also illustrates the living conditions in Cuba.

WEWERKA: The detail really pulls the viewer into her world. The woman’s eyes suggest the tale of her life. The camera angle is at her level and it feels like we are sitting across the table having a conversation.
Once Upon a Time

PHOTOGRAPHER: Michelle Hoff, D.O., family physician, Park Nicollet Melrose Center

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO: I was on a photo safari in the Serengeti of Tanzania. The photo was taken at 4 a.m. It was a clear night with a low moon. I actually had my camera laying on the ground for the long exposure to capture the stars. Taking the photo was actually a bit anxiety-producing. It was dark out, and this was not a gated, secure area. You could hear the animals, and they were the type that hunted at night. I had planned this trip as something to look forward to after my life had hit rock bottom. It was a pictorial lesson that amidst chaos and fear, you can find peace and beauty when you take the time to care for yourself.

WIEWERKA: The rich colors in the sky and the illumination on the tree make this image mesmerizing.

Edinburgh

PHOTOGRAPHER: Alex Sneiders, M.D., urologist, Mayo Clinic Health System, Owatonna and Faribault

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO: This classical view of the City of Edinburgh was naturally enhanced by the fireworks. The setting sun combined with the early fireworks display was in and of itself inspiring. The exposure for this image was tricky. I ended up with one exposure for the cityscape and a second for the fireworks.

WIEWERKA: The composition is very close to perfect.

You can see Steve Wewerka’s “Wandering i” and other photos at www.SteveWewerka.com/WanderingIProject.htm
**Freedom Tower**

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Lauren Orr, M.D., PGY-1

**general surgery, Mayo Clinic**

**WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO:** I was visiting the 9/11 Memorial during the anniversary week of the national tragedy. The memorial itself was a sobering sight, but as dusk fell and the patriotic lights of the adjacent Freedom Tower began to shine, hope and pride became the dominant emotions.

**WEWERKA:** Wonderful use of color. Good compositional balance. Technically, night shots are challenging.

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**A Flamingo’s Heart**

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Siu-Hin Wan, M.D., PGY-3  

**internal medicine, Mayo Clinic**

**WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO:** The vibrant colors of flamingos are naturally fascinating, but among the flock, this particular one caught my eye. Despite the presumed extroversion of these fascinating creatures, this image captures the grace, balance and sensitivities of these beautiful birds.

**WEWERKA:** The simplicity of the composition and use of color make this a strong image. It also successfully applies the rule of thirds, using three elements.
Ancient Wall
PHOTOGRAPHER: Lauren Orr, M.D., PGY-1 general surgery, Mayo Clinic
WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO: In a rare moment when no tourists were in sight at the Great Wall of China, I felt transported to another era, as if I were seeing the wall exactly as it appeared centuries ago.
WEWERKA: Great use of composition by applying a very strong leading line to pull the viewer deep into the image.

Ehrfurcht
PHOTOGRAPHER: Alyssa Larish, MS4, University of Minnesota Medical School
WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO: Literally translated, the word *ehrfurcht* means “reverence or awe” in German. This photo was taken in Salzburg between thunderstorms. The perfect light and humid air created an unexpectedly still moment. I was able to pause and capture it.
WEWERKA: I love images that create the feeling of depth. A strong foreground subject or the main subject strategically placed in the background pulls the viewer’s eye deep into the image. I also am drawn to symmetry. This image touches on both symmetry and the illusion of depth by staggering the three spires in the foreground to provide balance.
Simple Life

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kristin Comstock, MS4, University of Minnesota Medical School

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO:
Shortly after moving to Granite Falls for my Rural Physician Associate Program rotation, I decided to venture out and explore the town and surrounding area. Although there wasn’t much to see, it was easy to fall in love with what was there.

WEWERKA: What really makes this image for me is the use of color and the simplicity of minimalism.

Tranquility

PHOTOGRAPHER: Sarah Fleming, MS1, University of Minnesota Medical School, Twin Cities

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO: This was taken during the summer of 2012 in Glacier Bay, Alaska. The melting of the glaciers make the color of the water unlike any other body of water I have ever seen. The immense wild landscape and almost iridescent water transports you to a new world.

Gliding over the impeccably calm and striking waters of Alaska, I was mesmerized by the landscape unfolding in front of me. Fog cascaded down through the pristine untouched wilderness, blanketing the shore in a dewy sheen. My emotions mirrored my view—quiet, clear and free.

WEWERKA: What pulled me into this image was the color.