Many amateur photographers take pictures when they see something—often a landscape or a building—that strikes them as beautiful. To the judges of our photo contest, great photos aren’t necessarily the ones of beautiful places or things. They’re images that tell a story. They’re the ones that get us into the moment with the photographer, that cause us to pause, to take a second look, to wonder.

Professional photographer Steve Wewerka, who with Minnesota Medicine’s art director, Kathryn Forss, helped judge this year’s contest, says the winners in the student category clearly show the photographers’ intent to tell a story. “All three compelled me to stop and look closely at the creative way they captured a moment,” he says.

Of course, good photographs also display the photographer’s technical prowess—they’re well-composed and well-lit. Wewerka says technique was especially evident in the submissions in the physician category. “Where the images by the students captured the in-the-moment feel, the photographs in the physician category display a thoughtful understanding of the photographic process,” he says. “Each winner has a solid understanding of composition, balance and the use of light to convey a story.”

Here are the winning entries.

THEIR BEST SHOT
THE WINNERS OF OUR THIRD ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST
STUDENT CATEGORY

First place

The Cow in the Tower

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kristi Hultman

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO? “After hiking up to the top of Glastonbury Tor in England, I was surprised to see a herd of cows grazing around St. Michael’s Tower. The Tor has been occupied by various groups for thousands of years. The image captures its current resident, framed within the stone tower’s arches.”

WEWERKA: “Great composition and a bit of humor. The lines lead me in to the main subject.”
STUDENT CATEGORY
Second place

Maripositas

PHOTOGRAPHER: Erica Bohan

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO? “I wanted to capture the bliss of second graders eager to share what they had learned from a lesson about animal names.”

WEBERKA: “Great balance. What makes this image compelling is the suggestion of a child in the middle. … I don’t feel I am looking into this image but being looked at by the kids.”

STUDENT CATEGORY
Third place

North Shore Storm Front

PHOTOGRAPHER: Dan Larson

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO? “We were relaxing on the rocky shores of Lake Superior near Hovland, Minnesota, when this incredible storm front crept up on us. I ran inside to grab the camera and got this shot before we were pummeled with a violent hail storm.”

WEBERKA: “We are drawn to this photo’s atmospheric oddities. This photo has both intriguing subject matter and solid composition.”
PHYSICIAN CATEGORY

First place

Alleyway near Ponte Vecchio, Florence, Italy

PHOTOGRAPHER: Marilyn Peitso, M.D.

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO? "Strolling down a back alley in Florence, I was attracted by the juxtaposition of shapes, flash of color and symmetry in an otherwise drab and dingy back street."

WEVERKA: "Great balance and intriguing use of lines and mix of old and new subject matter. Shows awareness of lighting, which was used to make an image that demands attention."
PHYSICIAN CATEGORY

Second place

Humming Courtship

PHOTOGRAFER: Paul Dondlinger, D.O.

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO? “The technical challenge of capturing the detail of humming birds in flight. I was also inspired to capture one the most fascinating back yard displays nature affords us. We are surrounded by art, even in the least expected situations.”

WEWERKA: “Great use of color and natural space. Sometime it is the spaces not used that are the most telling aspect of an image. Top that with a great moment.”

PHYSICIAN CATEGORY

Third place

On the Trail to Mt. Cook

PHOTOGRAFER: Alex Sneiders, M.D.

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PHOTO? “I was imagining someone hiking to Mt. Cook under the southern stars.”

WEWERKA: “When used properly, the most basic photographic elements create an eye-catching image. This image uses complementary colors and vanishing point of view to capture the viewer’s eye.”