

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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***For Immediate Release***

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## **MILL VALLEY MAN WINS STATEWIDE AMATEUR COASTAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION**

(SAN FRANCISCO, October 14, 2010)—The California Coastal Commission has announced the winners of its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Amateur Coastal Photography Contest, and they are as follows:

First place: Kirke Wrench of Mill Valley.

Second place: Joan Sparks of Cupertino.

Third place: Kurt Fuchs of San Francisco.

Humor category winner: Ralph Wessel of Cayucos (San Luis Obispo County).

Thirteen other photographers received honorable mentions from the panel of judges. A total of 780 pictures were submitted to the contest this year.

Wrench's winning photo depicts a pier at Nick's Cove in the Marin County town of Marshall on Tomales Bay. He took the winning photo one evening when he took his wife, Patty, out to dinner at Nick's Cove just as the sun was going down. "I just happen to take my camera with me. I never imagined I would be taking an award-winning photograph that night," said Wrench of the experience. "I've never won a photo contest before," he added happily. For his prize, he selected a two-night stay in Sonoma County donated by the Fairmont Mission Inn & Spa. Wrench, a financial consultant and former CFO, has been concentrating on improving his photography skills for the past few years. He is a resident of Mill Valley and a volunteer photographer for the National Park Service where he focuses on taking wildlife photographs in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The winner in the category for Best Humorous Photo was Ralph Wessel, who snapped a shot of elephant seals on the beach enjoying "gossip time." The second-place photo taken by Joan Sparks depicts a snowy egret perched in a tree. And the third-place photograph by Kurt Fuchs shows children playing on Bowling Ball Beach in Mendocino.

All winning photos and honorable mentions are displayed on the Coastal Commission's website at [www.coast4u.org](http://www.coast4u.org) (copies for media available upon request).

The Coastal Commission's statewide photography contest encourages amateur photographers to take pictures of California's spectacular coast and ocean. Entrants may submit images of coastal wildlife, coastal scenery, or people enjoying the coast. The contest is held every year and this year was co-sponsored by Fairmont Hotels & Resorts of California. Members of the public who would like to receive information when the 2011 contest is announced may call (800) Coast-4U or e-mail [coast4u@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:coast4u@coastal.ca.gov) to be placed on a mailing list.

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