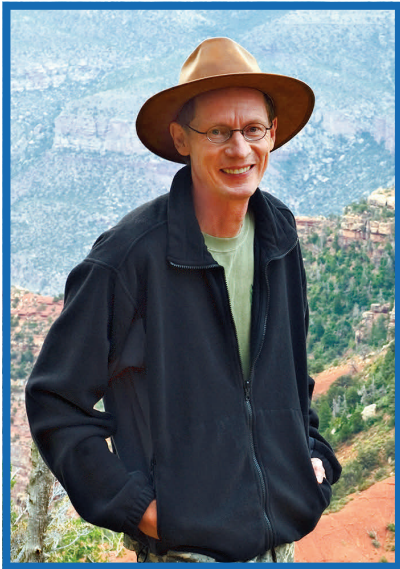


# Retiree Makes His Photography Hobby a Very Successful Career

Interview and Article by Gene Murphy

*Meet EJ Peiker, landscape photographer extraordinaire, who has traveled the world from Antarctica to the Dolomites, from Iceland to South Africa.*



*EJ at the Grand Canyon*

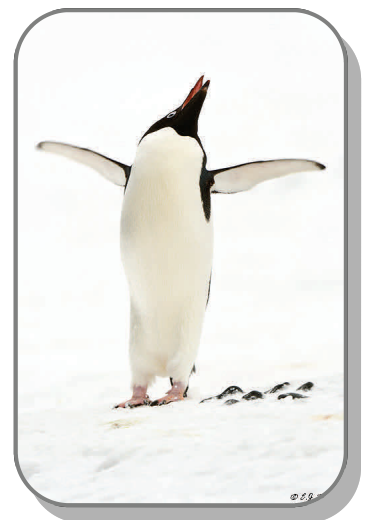
There are many retirees who have spent their post-Intel years traveling around the world to exotic locations. There are also those who have become very good photographers. However, there is probably only one who has combined these two activities to make a successful business. That person is EJ Peiker. EJ lives in the Chandler, Arizona area and is a co-founder of the world's largest website dedicated to nature photography, NatureScapes.net. He is a world-renowned landscape photographer, who has photographed 6 of the 7 continents with photos featured in publications of the Smithsonian Institute, American Museum of Natural History and National Geographic. Somehow Australia has escaped him thus far.

For those of you who do not know EJ, he spent 27 years at Intel mostly working in the fab organization. He started his career as a Product Engineer on EPROMs in Santa Clara and worked his way up the ladder to a Factory Manager both in Fab 12 and Fab 22. Finally in 2009 he decided to exercise the rule of 75 and venture into his next career, nature photography on a full time basis.



*Atlantic Puffin in Chamomile photographed at Latrabjarg, Iceland*

EJ's passion for photography began when he was seven years old and he received a Kodak Instamatic camera from his grandparents as a Christmas present. There was no looking back for EJ as he graduated to more and more sophisticated equipment. In fact today he enjoys restoring old model cameras, which he used during his early photography days. At a young age he began to specialize in shooting landscapes and animal life, particularly birds. He admits that shooting photos of people really didn't interest him. When I asked EJ why he likes shooting photos of birds, he said he believes it grew out of his love for ducks, which he developed as a boy. He also noted that ducks are very intelligent birds, which makes them good subjects.



*Adelie Penguin photographed at Brown Bluff, Antarctica*

As his hobby escalated EJ began to integrate his love of nature and travel with photography. While he was working at Intel he would often take off on weekends to visit “cool places” to shoot interesting pictures. Taking a “redeye” flight on a Friday night and heading across country to places like Barnegat Bay, New Jersey and returning to New Mexico for work on Monday morning was a frequent occurrence for him. Naturally after he retired, EJ was able to devote all his time to his avocation, which had now become his vocation. Although his title at Naturescapes.net is Technical Editor, EJ’s specialty is leading workshops for the company. Now he does not run these workshops in an office or room. No, they are done at exotic locations around the world. For example EJ may lead a guided tour to shoot photos of Puffins in Iceland or Leopards in Africa.

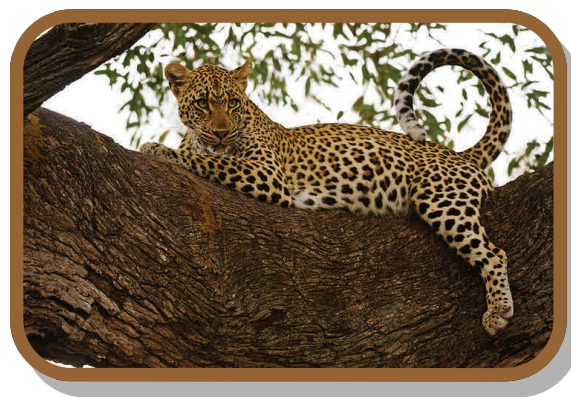


*Milford Sound, South Island, New Zealand*

When I asked EJ what locations were his favorites to visit, he mentioned quite a few. However, there were two places for which he has particular fondness: Antarctica and Iceland. He says Antarctica is a special place with a pristine environment and a striking mountain landscape. Also he finds Iceland to be unique. He joked that Nordic discoverers should have called it Greenland instead of its current name due to its verdant landscape.

brained, you’d think there wouldn’t be much overlap. However, skills he learned at Intel like time management and negotiating have been useful in his new business. Also so much of digital photography is now computer related and digital sensors are made using similar semiconductor processes with which he was involved for many years. This knowledge helps him to stay sharp and keep up to date on technology developments in the photography industry.

EJ has some interesting advice for folks who are seriously considering making their hobby a real business. First of all, he says you should be exceptionally passionate about it. Secondly, you should expect no days off. Also making money at a hobby, which becomes a business is difficult. Therefore, you should be financially secure to undertake the venture.



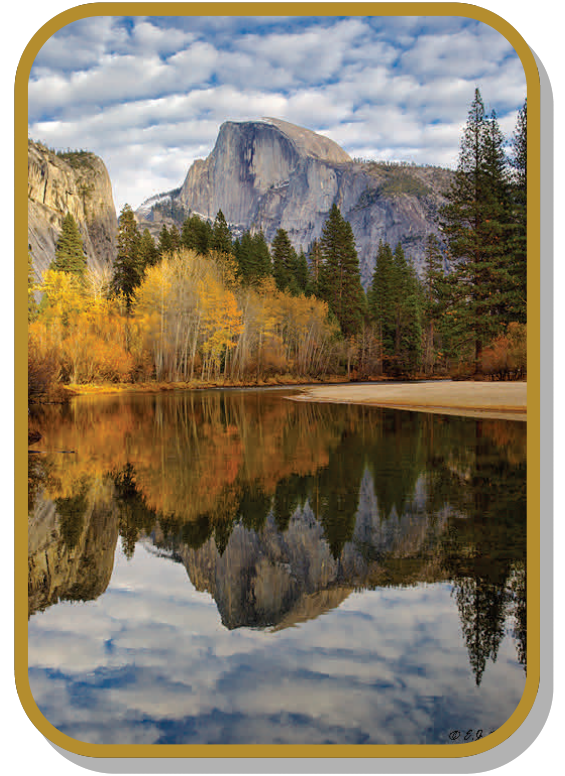
*Leopard, South Africa*

As far as general advice for all potential retirees, EJ says that they should clearly understand what the costs of healthcare are going to be, if they are not yet eligible for Medicare. He says that he found the Intel Retiree Medical Plan to be very expensive compared to other plans that are available. He advises that after retirement you should plan for annual premium costs to increase at 15% per year. So make sure you shop around!



*Alpe di Siusi, Dolomites, Italy*

EJ is very excited about his photography career which he feels is just beginning. Of course he still has to get to Australia to shoot some amazing photographs. If you'd like to discuss photography or learn more about the various continents, you can contact EJ at [ejpeiker@cox.net](mailto:ejpeiker@cox.net) or visit the [website](#) - a great resource for nature photographers!



*Half Dome, Yosemite  
National Park, CA*