

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Miramonte student strives to 'create curiosity' through the lens



Miramonte High School junior Thomas Edwardson



Crab spider inside California Poppy, UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, Santa Cruz, CA



California Quail, Valle Vista, Moraga, CA

Photos provided

By Diane Claytor

It's often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. If someone wanted to use words to describe photographs taken by Miramonte High School junior Thomas Edwardson, "breathtaking," "beautiful," "awesome," and "unbelievable" would likely be the ones most frequently uttered.

The 17-year-old, who has only been a serious nature and wildlife photographer for approximately four years, has an incredible eye and true gift for capturing the ordinary in a unique and creative way.

Edwardson credits the movie "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" as the catalyst for his interest in photography. "There's this one scene in the movie," he remembers, "where there's a photographer waiting and waiting to get a shot of a snow leopard. He has all this amazing gear. But surprisingly, once the animal appeared, he didn't take the picture, saying that he just enjoyed the moment he shared in the presence of the beautiful animal." This resonated with Edwardson, who has long had a fascination for wildlife, nature and conservation. This may have started from the many nature shows he watched as a boy, or perhaps the weekends spent going to different zoos.

Borrowing his mother's

camera one day, Edwardson went for a walk and took his first nature photo: a picture of moss. That was the beginning of his journey. Photos of flowers, leaves, bugs, birds, plants and animals followed. He put together his first book of beautiful photos, "Fragile Beauty," filled with pictures of living things found in nature.

He studied on his own, learning about the camera, techniques, lighting and the surrounding ecosystem. He took classes and workshops. "I really want to give credit to one man in particular," Edwardson states, "National Geographic photographer Frans Lanting," who served as the publication's photographer-in-residence and whose incredible nature photos have been featured in numerous publications. Lanting, based in Santa Cruz, holds regular workshops for small groups of photographers, most of whom are professionals. Edwardson, who calls Lanting his mentor, says "getting to work with him has been amazing. He has been my inspiration."

Edwardson likes to take pictures from different, but revealing, perspectives. "I want to create curiosity. I like to get up close to something to show its true beauty because I don't think most people typically look hard enough for that," he explains.

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