



## Wally Pacholka

Wally Pacholka was an accountant by day, but he had a moonlighting "job" where he's always shined. He's won national awards for his pictures, including 37 APOD's. Wally has a knack for being in the right place at the right time in the middle of nowhere in the dead of night.

Wally shoots celestial events — comets, close visits by other planets, meteor showers and the occasional Milky Way cluster — with our national parks and other down-to-earth scenery gracing the foregrounds of his frames.

Not exactly an original pursuit to anyone who recalls the 1960 Ansel Adams masterpiece "Moon and Half Dome," but the freelance astrophotographer does it well. Pacholka is a winner of "Picture of the Year" for Time and Life magazines' end-of-year photograph editions. Both magazines honored him in 2003 for shots he took when Mars made its closest pass to Earth in almost 60,000 years, and Time also

tabbed him in 1997 for a picture he took of Comet Hale-Bopp above Joshua Tree National Park.

National Geographic also has used several of his shots, and NASA has shown dozens of his images, including 37 of them as the "Astronomy Picture of the Day"

His current project is blazing around the West's bevy of beautiful national parks for some late-night sky collaborations with the stars. He's done the Grand Canyon, Joshua Tree, Arches and others. Next up are Yosemite and Yellowstone.

"I feel like I'm on a life's purpose," says Pacholka. 'I just love the night sky'

Wally employs simple techniques and does nothing extraordinary to get his shots. He uses a standard 50mm lens mounted on a tripod, and points a small flashlight on nearby desirable rocks and other land features he wants to stand out in the photo.

