

## Stock Photography Niche

**Stock photography is a mine field. At least that's what all the current publications tell us about the various pricing models and the glut of stock imagery available to buyers. Entering the field is like walking a maze with a different route around every corner.**

Not so, for Pat and Mark Hunt of Huntstock, Inc. ([www.huntstock.com](http://www.huntstock.com)). They have found their niche. Both have been pioneering in the photo industry for over twenty years, Mark as a painter and photographer, and Pat as a stock agency owner. Together they produced some of the first royalty free discs on the market offering Mark Hunt Painted Backdrops in digital form. Pat was one of the first to offer royalty free images in her agency catalog.

Today's big market seller is lifestyle imagery. Imagery that is real, dynamic, unstaged and high quality. To keep swimming through a market that is bogged down with volume, price challenges and mediocrity, one must have a specialty niche which distinguishes the work, shines above the rest, and fills a need in a saturated industry. For Huntstock that niche is "Positive Lifestyle of People with Disabilities."

Today's progressive lifestyle is not the same as years past. Family makeup is more unique, ethnicities are mixed, females are rising up the corporate ladder and people with various disabilities are leading active, mobile and fun lifestyles. They are running companies, playing sports, traveling independently, enjoying higher educations and making a difference in the world. It's a mobile and positive lifestyle. City streets, common buildings and private homes are being creatively designed to accommodate every need for access and space.

Since they have gone down this path for their photo niche the Hunts have made a whole new set of friends. They have enjoyed the opportunity to meet people who are innovators and leaders in their community. They have been inspired by people who have to make an extra effort, but allow nothing to stop them. They have enjoyed life from a whole new viewpoint.

Christopher Hart is one of the stars of this photo effort, and a truly amazing person. Greatly respected by all of his friends and associates, Chris is the Director of Urban and Public Transportation Projects at Adaptive Environments in Boston, Massachusetts. Born with cerebral palsy, Chris is active in a motorized wheelchair. Educated at the University of Massachusetts, he uses his design expertise in "universal and human centered design," particularly in urban and transit settings. Chris serves on two national transportation boards, is deeply involved with transportation finance discussions, and has been instrumental in transforming Boston's transit system, the MBTA, into an accessible system for all. For his pedestrian design and advocacy work on sidewalk surfaces he won the WalkBoston's 2006 Golden Shoe Award. He now leads the design review of many city projects and serves as technical and legal advisor for a variety of local and national

initiatives. Traveling extensively, he has photographed transit systems on three continents.

Health challenges are never far away. In 2006 he survived the need for a rare neurosurgery procedure and states, "I had too much to do still and most importantly I haven't found someone to assist me in establishing my foundation." Aside from design juries, writing and public speaking, Chris skis, hand cycles and sails. He's looking to "meet the love of his life." He is an inspiration to everyone.

Another man known for "making the great outdoors more accessible" is Tom McCarthy. Tom will poignantly quote, "When you eliminate the barriers in the world, you eliminate the disability." Tom is the Director of the Universal Access Program for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. His outdoor focus is state parks and forests. Responsible for enabling skiing, kayaking, swimming and biking he loves seeing people with disabilities having fun.

Having had polio at the age of six, Tom utilizes a wheelchair for mobility. Educated at Amherst College and further trained as a landscape architect, he has spent a career creating access to beaches, enhancing picnic areas and fishing access, opening hiking trails and natural areas to people of all abilities. Tom says, "disabilities take many forms, from developmental disabilities and mental retardation to people who are deaf or blind, people who are in wheelchairs, people with limited energy and the elderly. What we have found is that you can't build accessibility for everyone, so we create the opportunity to experience what people are looking for in the parks, contact with nature, beautiful scenery, peace and quiet, and the opportunity to participate in outdoor recreation." Tom has made it his goal to create these experiences.

Activities such as hiking, summer paddling, winter skiing, and kick sledding are popular. A kick sled offers a wooden seat on cross country skis. It's great fun for those with difficulty walking. Accessible hiking trails have to be built with a stable surface, no steps and no water bars. These are barriers that are not on the minds of most walkers. This past year, Tom and the Universal Access Program have added sailing to the list of activities available to everyone in Massachusetts parks regardless of ability. Tom says, "Grow where you're planted. Take what is closest to you and make that your avocation."

Taking inspiration from such creative people as these, Huntstock has initiated a collection of images that are meant to be fun, active and conceptual. They are meant to document and demonstrate, as well as inspire and uplift. They are commercial and they are editorial. They are "Positive Lifestyle of People with Disabilities"

**(Pat Hunt is a writer and workshop leader for the stock photo industry, and Managing Director of *Huntstock.com* in Boston, a Royalty Free lifestyle production company. [pat@huntstock.com](mailto:pat@huntstock.com). All images are courtesy of © Mark Hunt of Huntstock, [mark@huntstock.com](mailto:mark@huntstock.com).**

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SIDEBAR:

**Other Niche Stock Photography Collections:**

**Blend Images**, [www.blendimages.com](http://www.blendimages.com), Celebrating ethnic diversity.

**Photosindia** [www.photosindia.com](http://www.photosindia.com), Images from the modern lifestyle of India.

**40260**, [www.40260.com](http://www.40260.com), Targets the age demographic of 40 to 60 years old.

**Glow Images**, [www.glowimages.com](http://www.glowimages.com), Specializing in Latin lifestyle.

**RedChopsticks**, [www.redchopsticks.com](http://www.redchopsticks.com), Delivers Asian content from Singapore to Beijing to Tokyo.

**Science Faction**, [www.sciencefaction.net](http://www.sciencefaction.net), Science and technology imagery.

**GoGo Images**, [www.gogoimages.com](http://www.gogoimages.com), Latin, Chinese, Indian and Black lifestyle.

**Arabian Eye**, [www.arabianeye.com](http://www.arabianeye.com), Middle Eastern lifestyle.

POSSIBLE PULL QUOTES:

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