

**Bold red texts
are
interactive links!**

FOCUS

**IT'S OUR
90TH
SEASON!**

Volume 88 - No. 4

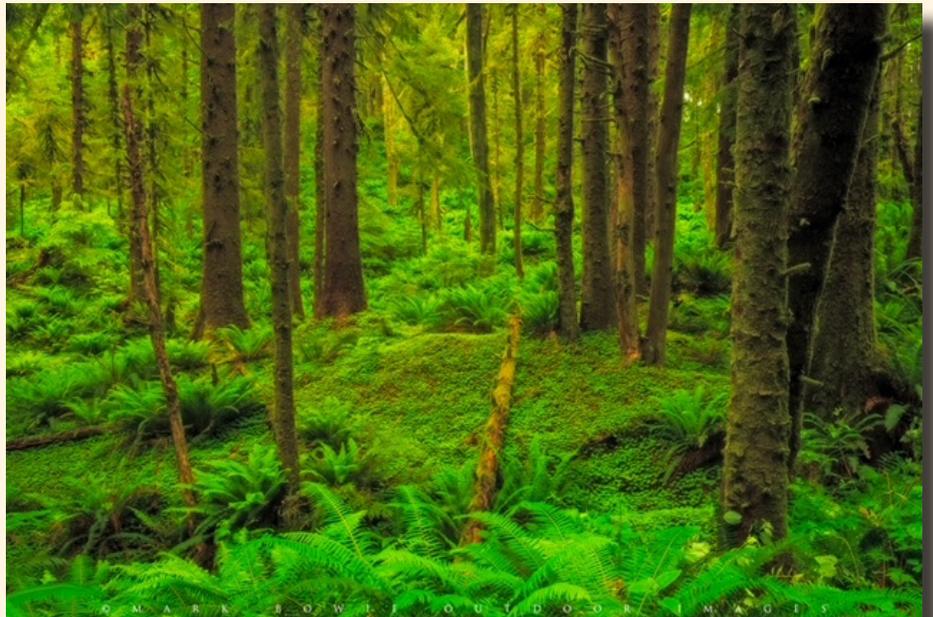
<https://spsphoto.org/>

December 2021

**EVENT
NIGHT**

FORESTS; The Art of Photographing Trees and Woods by Mark Bowie December 15, 2021

In celebration of the majesty of trees and woodlands, this project examines in-depth the fine art of seeing and photographing these magnificent life forms. It is commonly thought that to photograph forests well, one has to make order out of the chaos. That's true, but there's so much more to artfully portraying trees. I'll delve deep into seeing creative possibilities, composing for visual separation and to accentuate lines, forms, patterns and textures. I'll offer strategies for photographing deep inside forests, along their edges and from on high, and illustrate the artistic opportunities presented by different weather and lighting conditions, most notably, fog. Good tree and forest imagery is also elevated through artistic processing. I'll cover effective contrast and color



adjustments, image softening techniques, abstract expressionism and amazing black and white conversion — all with the goal of creating moody, atmospheric woodland images that convey the beauty, grace and power of trees.

Continued...

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HAPPY

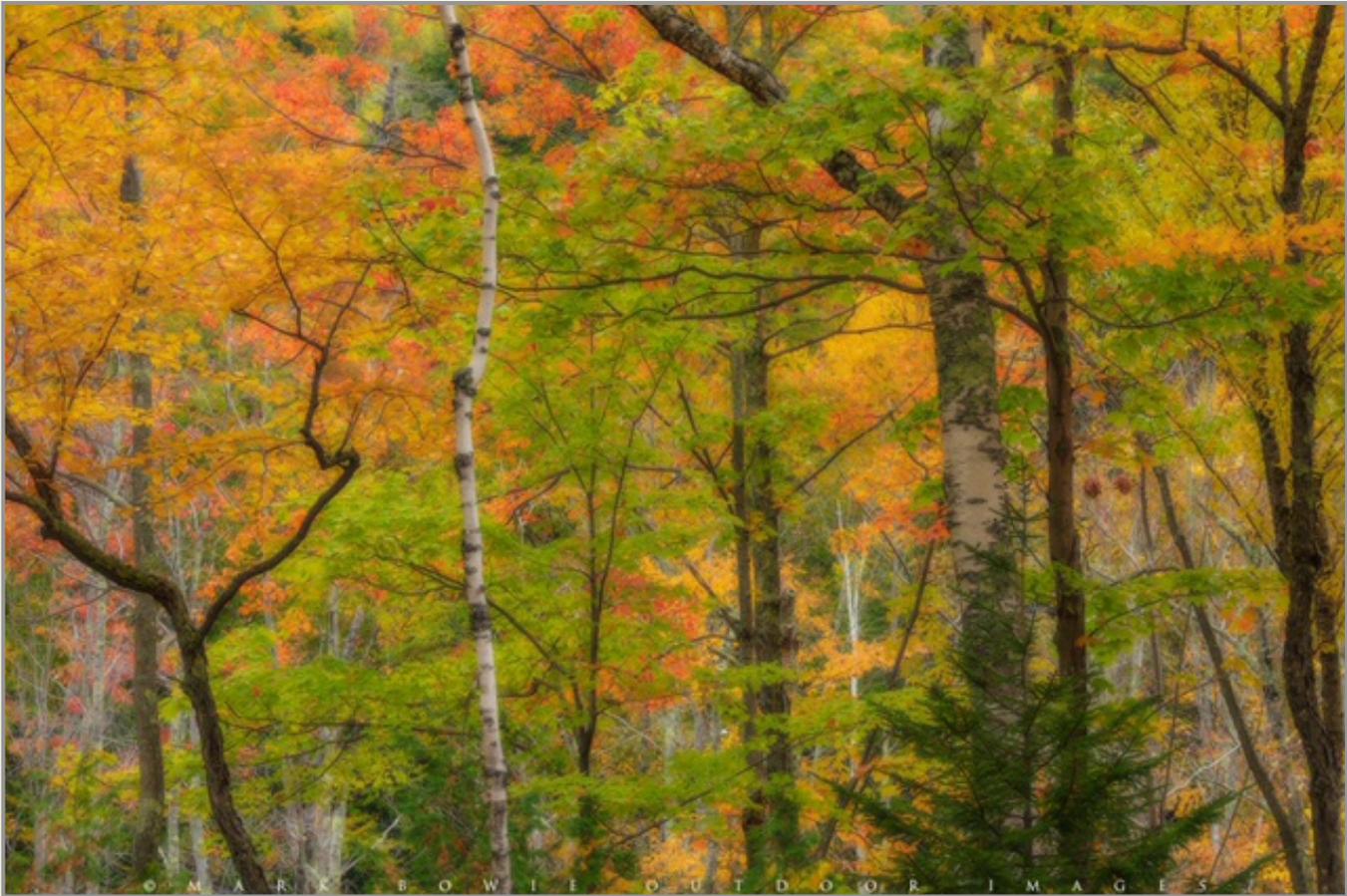


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Forests

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Continued...

Forests

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Continued...

Forests

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Mark Bowie is a professional nature photographer, writer and much sought-after public speaker. His work has been published internationally in books and magazines, on calendars, posters, and greeting cards, and in advertising media. He has authored three coffee table books on his native Adirondacks, two e-books on night photography and one on his photographic journey, *Finding November*. He has also produced an instructional video, *Multiple Exposures for Maximum Landscapes*, demonstrating how to shoot and blend images as panoramas, HDR's, layer masks, focus stacks, and more. Mark is a staff instructor for the Adirondack Photography Institute and leads digital and landscape photography workshops. For more on his work visit his website, www.markbowie.com.



FOCUS ON YOU???

In each issue of the *Focus* we try to include an article about one of our members...old or new!

This month we are focusing on M-J Adelman.

Who will it be next month...or the following...or the following? Could it be you?

I would love to have some volunteers to be our "Focus."

All you have to do is tell us about your photographic journey and include some of your favorite images. It's your column to express your feelings about photography, how you got started, what specific genres you are interested in, etc.

How can you be the Focus?

Email me: focuseditor@icloud.com

**SPECIAL
EVENT
NIGHT**

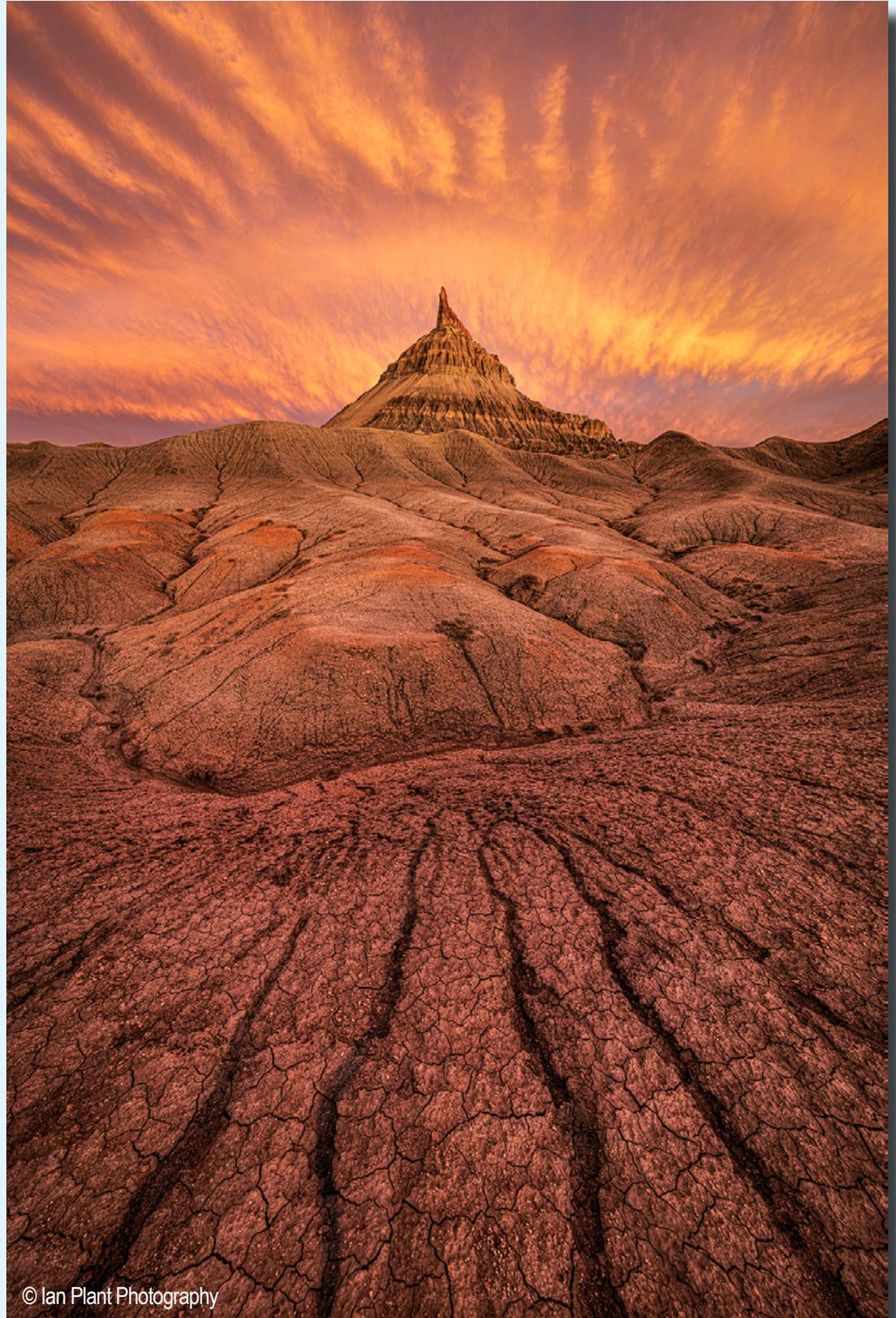
VISUAL DESIGN TECHNIQUES FOR MAKING STUNNING PHOTOS

by Ian Plant

December 29, 2021

In this presentation, professional photographer Ian Plant will share some of his favorite photos from around the world, as well as some of his top composition techniques for making compelling photographs that get noticed.

You'll gain a better understanding of visual design principles from this inspiring presentation.



© Ian Plant Photography

Continued...

Visual Design Techniques

(Continued from page 3)



© Ian Plant Photography



© Ian Plant Photography

Continued...

Visual Design Techniques

(Continued from page 3)



See more of Ian's Visual Design Techniques
on his website:

<https://www.ianplant.com/>

and

<https://www.shutterstock.com/>



Artist's Statement:

I can't draw, paint, or carry a tune, but I can press a button with my finger. Of course, if you want to make inspiring photographs, there's a lot that needs to happen before that button is pressed. These days, too many photographers rely on the crutch of digital manipulation to bring magic to their images. Personally, I'm more interested in capturing the true magic of the moment, not concocting it on the computer. For me, photography is as much about the experience as it is about the final product.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Joe Cotroneo

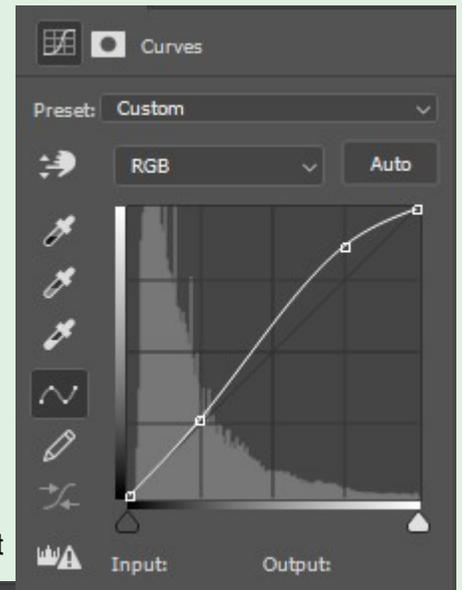
The holiday season is upon us. I hope you all had a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving. I'd like to wish you each a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa and Happy Holidays each to your own traditions. There's plenty of photo opportunities this time of year from family gatherings to holiday decorations. Here's a suggestion to give your holiday light photos a special glow. Try the Orton Effect.

Step by step instructions and an example using Photoshop are given below.

6. Use the curves layer to raise the highlights to taste and lower the shadows back to about linear.
7. Change the Gaussian blur layer blending mode to screen.
8. Bring the Gaussian blur layer opacity to zero and then raise it to taste. I chose 76% in this example.
9. If you like you can mask the Gaussian blur layer to selectively apply the Orton Effect.

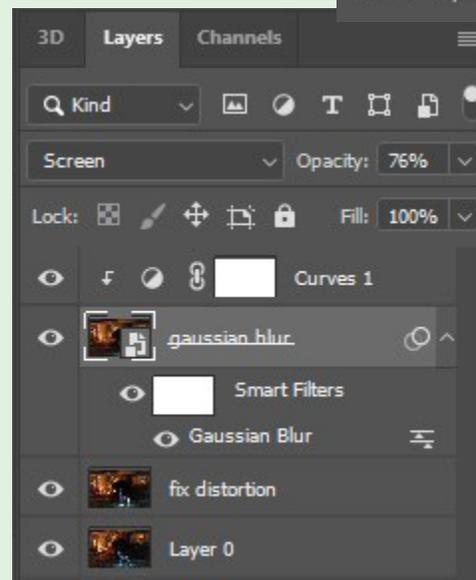


Normal



Curves Adjustment

0. Do your normal post processing.
1. Duplicate your background layer and label it Gaussian blur or whatever you like.
2. Right click and convert it to a smart object. This will allow you to go back and make adjustments later.
3. On the Gaussian blur layer click filter > blur > Gaussian blur and pick the radius to taste. I chose 18 in this example.
4. On your Gaussian blur layer click layer > new adjustment layer > curves.
5. Right click and create clipping mask to clip the curves layer to the Gaussian blur layer. This will have the curves only affect that layer and not all the layers below it.



Layers Panel

When you're done the layers panel should look something like this.

Continued...

Message from the President

(Continued from page 8)

Since you used a smart object you can go back and change any of the settings to get the look you're after. In the Orton photo you can see a dreamy glow vs normal processing. You can make it subtle as I did here or go wild.

If you don't use Photoshop you can try Googling Orton Effect for your particular software. I'm guessing any program with layers can be used to make the Orton Effect. If you have Topaz Studio 2 one of the "looks" is the Orton Effect.



Orton

Happy Shooting!

Joe Cotroneo

FACEBOOKS THE THREE FACES OF SPS

Do you all know that the Schenectady Photographic Society has THREE Facebook pages? Well, actually, one Page and Two Groups. What does that mean?

According to Facebook, a Page is: "[a place] on Facebook where artists, public figures, businesses, brands, organizations and nonprofits can connect with their fans or customers. When someone likes or follows a Page on Facebook, they can start seeing updates from that Page in their News Feed."

Per Facebook, "Groups are a place to communicate about shared interests with certain people. You can create a group for anything—your family reunion, your after-work sports team, your book club—and customize the group's privacy settings depending on who you want to be able to join and see the group. When you join a group on Facebook, you start seeing content from that group in your News Feed."

At SPS we have two Groups: one which is open to everyone (members and non-members), and one for members only.

Continued...

The Three Facebooks of SPS

(Continued from page 9)

Note: Home page images may change.

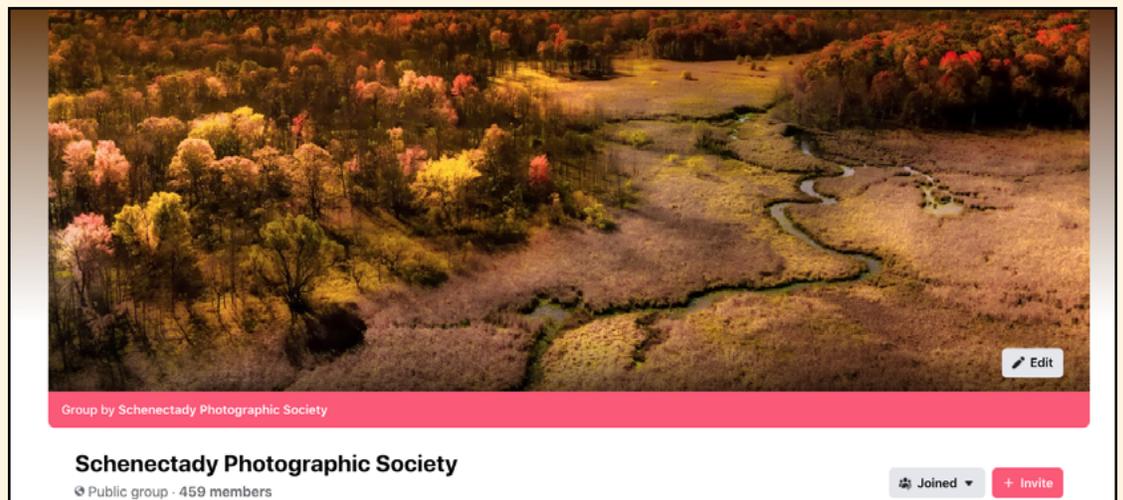
SPS PAGE: Posts by SPS Administration Only
<https://www.facebook.com/schenectadyphotographicsociety>



Right now the home Page of SPS looks like this. It is where your Board will post notices and articles of interest to members, including (when we meet again in person) notices of meeting cancellations, etc.

SPS GROUP: Open to all for posting - members and non-members
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/schenectadyphotographicsociety>

Open to all
(SPS members
and non-members)
for
photography-related
posts.



SPS BACK TO SCHOOL: SPS Members ONLY
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/sp.s.back.to.school>



We created this Page the “summer of COVID” to give members an opportunity to continue to share images. It still serves that function today, and is the best place to solicit feedback on your images from fellow members. (Note: In the summer it reverts to “SPS Summer School”).

Editor's Note:
We will continue to
include this article
to entice you to
participate!

KEEP THINKING ABOUT YOUR PHOTO ESSAY

Competition: March 16, 2022

Yes, the Photo Essay competition is a long way off, but it takes time to plan and put together. Start now!

I cannot encourage members enough to try their hand at a photo essay. It's creative, challenging and fun to put together, but it does take a little more time than shooting a few images and submitting them for competition.

So, what is a photo essay? Finding a subject is all about finding your photo passion. What do you love taking photos of? Do you love a subject like flowers, dogs or horses? Perhaps it's a special place or event...photos from a trip to Yellowstone Park, Argentina or Nantucket? Pull together your best shots around a topic and then create a slide show, video, time lapse, or all of the above.

Building a slide show isn't difficult. There are a number of programs you can use. It doesn't matter if you are on a Mac- or Windows-based computer. Lightroom Classic includes a module for editing photos into a slide show complete with music and video. The most popular program for creating slide shows on a PC has been ProShow Gold. Unfortunately, this software is no longer supported, but you can find it or alternatives on the web.

If you are a Mac user, then FotoMagico (by Boinx) is a popular slideshow builder and relatively easy to use.

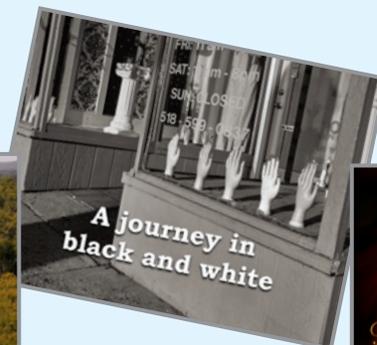
Look for software that allows you to control the

Last season's winners...



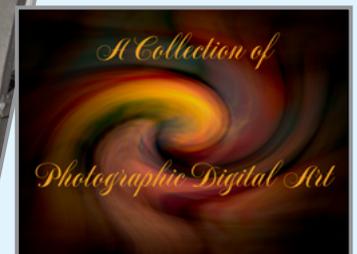
1st © Linda Tommasulo

2nd © Sean Sullivan



3rd © Rich Schreibsetin

HM © Joe Cotroneo



pace of the slideshow and match the transitions to the music. It may also allow for movement, called the Ken Burns effect, zooming in on your images to add impact. Select music that fits the mood of your photos and set the pace of your images to also fit that mood. Remember to use non-copyrighted or "rights free" music since we will be broadcasting on Zoom and including the winners on YouTube. Just Google search for "rights-free music." Some websites offer free music if you annotate the copyright holder.

Our rules allow for photo essays up to 8 minutes, however, this is generally too long. Optimum time would be 3-5 minutes. For good flow, every image needs to earn its place in your slideshow. Sadly, sometimes you have to remove an image you love.

Once you're happy with your photo essay, save the file as either a .mov file (Mac QuickTime file) or the standard PC based .mp4 file. Most of the programs offer a variety of file formats for saving your essay. When it's properly saved, send it to Dow Smith, chair of the Photo Essay Competition at dowsmith323@gmail.com using "drop-box," "WeTransfer" or any of the cloud-based services that handle large files.

Take a look at the rules posted on the [SPSPPhoto.org](https://spsphoto.org) website if you have any questions:

<https://spsphoto.org/competitions/photo-essay/photo-essay-competition-rules/>

DEADLINE: MIDNIGHT, MARCH 9!

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM BRYAN PETERSON

I hope you saw Bryan Peterson's wonderful presentation on October 27, "The Art of Seeing Adjectives, Not Nouns." If not, the link is available to all SPS members. He had so many great thoughts that I'd like to share some of the salient points here. Words of wisdom from a photography master...

LINES

A line can be thick, or thin, short or long, vertical, horizontal, curvilinear, or diagonal. Each line has an emotional message. Vertical lines, are strong but rigid. Horizontal lines are calm and restful. Curvilinear lines are whimsical, carefree, soothing and they are the lines that also speak of the human shape and form and finally diagonal lines are always on the move, never at rest. They are the lines of Wall Street, 'profit and loss', they are lines of 'ambition' and 'focus' and 'direction'. The thicker any line the more 'forceful' is its message and the length of any line determines the volume of its 'voice'.

TEXTURE

Textures are everywhere and you began your own experience with textures at birth from the 'warmth' of our Mother's interior to the 'cool' temperatures of the outside world. And as you have been experiencing since birth, textures are about FEELINGS; HOT or COLD, or SHARP or DULL or ROUGH or SMOOTH or HARD or SOFT or HEAVY or LIGHT and if you were not aware of it, every texture is comprised of LINES!

PATTERN

The role of PATTERN is to "play it much louder!" Pattern IS the AMPLIFICATION of Lines, Textures, Shapes, Forms and/or Colors.

SHAPE and FORM

Shape and form are both closely aligned. In fact it can be easily argued that the FORM of an object is a sidelit view of its SHAPE. Put another way: A shape is seen head on, either against a very bright light source such as a the SILHOUETTED shape of your wife or husband when photographed against the sunset on the beach in Hawaii. A silhouetted shape does not reveal color or texture so we are almost 'clueless' when asked to describe gender, hair color, clothing, ethnicity, sex when looking only at SHAPE, yet much like a SILHOUETTED tree, we may not know much about either SILHOUETTED SHAPE but we can state in point of fact that we are looking at a HUMAN or a TREE. FORM is revealed when that same shape is SIDELIT. Landscape photographers are 'famous' for shooting landscapes that are sidelit since it creates a composition of VOLUME. Likewise a side-lit portrait has VOLUME too!

COLOR

EVERY LINE, TEXTURE, SHAPE, FORM and PATTERN is comprised of a COLOR or COLORS. And every COLOR, every HUE every TONE has its own unique emotional message, BUT no element of design is more 'personal' than that of COLOR. If you were to ask someone what is their favorite LINE, TEXTURE, SHAPE, FORM or PATTERN, the response may be slow in forthcoming, but ask anyone what is their favorite COLOR and the reply is quick, without any hesitation! (For a much more in depth understanding of COLOR consider my course UNDERSTANDING COLOR.)

"Quit being seduced by the obvious. Nine times out of ten, obvious is a noun. Instead, investigate."

"If you're going to shoot nouns, make them compelling."

"If you're going to shoot a noun, my recommendation is really analyze the noun and say, 'What can I do to set this apart from all the other people who are going to shoot the same thing?'"

"Every single texture is comprised of lines."

"When it comes to finding images, as opposed to creating images, there is a vast, vast difference. If you're into creating images you won't have any shortage. Every day you'll be creating something new. If you're just going to hit the streets and hope you find something, man, you're going to have droughts...long, long droughts."

"Curiosity has probably gifted me with countless images over the years."

"Remove the noun from the conversation and maybe you'll start seeing more adjectives."

"If you are not part of the creative process, man, you're going to have droughts....missing one great photo to the next."

"Whatever canvas you want to create...you grab all the stuff you need to make that happen, and I'm on your side."

"When you're photographing dark skin, meter at minus 1-1/3. You have to shoot snow at 1-1/3 over exposed."

"Form is always sidelit. Form can never be backlit, rarely frontlit; but, almost without fail, form is revealed when sidelit."

"If you're going to stage something... make it believable."

FOCUS ON

M-J Adelman

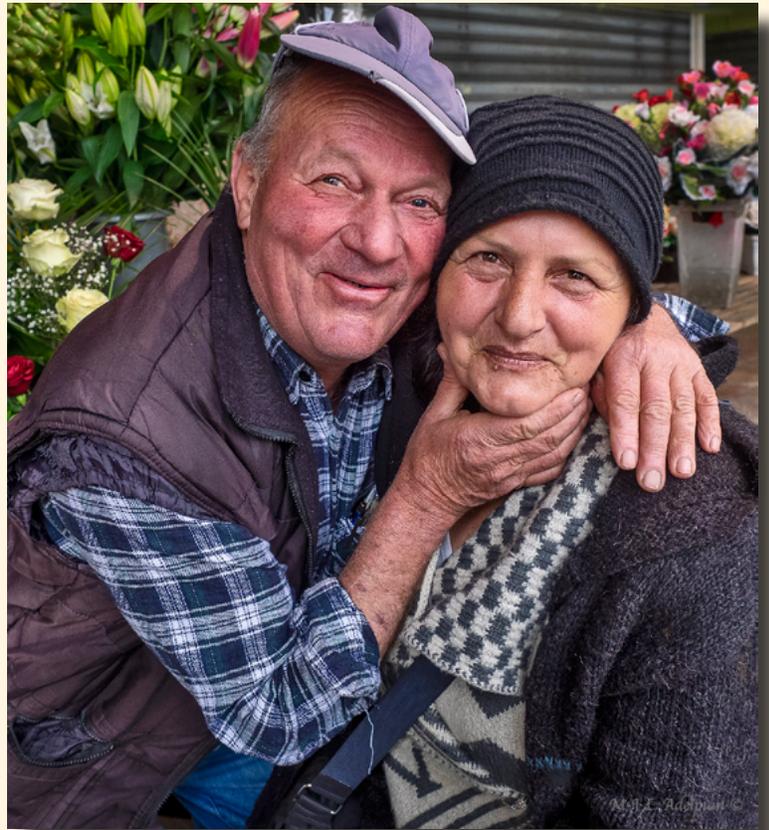
Greetings SPSers! Never thought I would see myself on the pages of *The Focus* – but – here I am to tell my tale.

It is simplistic to say I have been a Travel/Cultural Photographer for over 22 years because so much travel, experiencing other cultures and environments is at the foundation as well as constantly learning how to best apply my, at first, fledgling photographic skills beginning with a Panasonic film camera requiring the photo to manually advance the film.

I say 22 years based on when I put down the point and shoot and began working with a “real” camera! The point and shoot and video cameras have always been a part of my life and much of my practice was family oriented. Sound familiar?

On my first trip to Africa, I traveled with the Panasonic film camera, and missed the opportunity to photograph an elephant standing directly behind our safari vehicle because I had not advanced the film. When I returned home, I immediately remedied that by purchasing my first Minolta film camera – that advanced the film!

In 2005, I turned to digital and haven’t turned back! After shooting the gambit of Minolta, Sony



2016 Montenegro: Vendor Couple

and Canon, in 2016, I turned to the Olympus OM-D E-M1 series. One of the driving factors was international, on-board weight restrictions. I have been working with two Mark II bodies for some years and recently purchased the Mark III. Now, each of my primary lenses will have its own body! My current kit includes all Olympus lenses: 12-40 F2.8 Pro, 40-150 F2.8 Pro, 300 F4 Pro, 100-400 F5-6.3 and a macro lens.

Although I traveled within my birth country, Canada, my adopted country USA, and Europe, I did not really make my “overseas” journey until 1999. At that time, it was a toss-up: China and Tibet vs African Safari: South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. China and Tibet won mainly because I wanted to see the Yangtze River before China completed the Three Gorges Dam and raised the water level 500 feet. I treasure a “Chry-



2012 Buenos Aires, Argentina: LaBoca

Continued...

Focus on M-J Adelman

(Continued from page 13)

santhemum Stone” I rescued from the banks of one of the Gorges.

I went spending a week in Tibet and three weeks in China: seeing the Potala Palace, climbing the Great Wall of China, visiting the Terracotta Soldiers, sailing down the Yangtze River, and so much more. Thus, a pattern of traveling overseas was established and learning about our world, the environment, the people and wildlife that inhabit became my passion.

The following year, 2000, Africa became my destination and what a fabulous trip. I traveled with the nicest people, saw some unbelievable wildlife and came home with rolls of film. Throughout the years, I have continued to travel, make friends and “see” the world. At this point I have visited every continent and within them numerous countries, states and provinces.

Looking through the lens of the camera has allowed me to interact and connect with the people and learn about and appreciate their cultures. Although I only speak English, I have found that communicating with your eyes, smile and heart is all you need.

One of the most memorable examples of this occurred in the very busy back streets of Varanasi in India. We were making our way down a very narrow byway dodging carts being pulled by animals, people carrying their package on bicycles and a few motorbikes. I looked up and into the wise and most beautiful eyes of a Holy Man peacefully sitting on a step and smiled – a connection! I looked down at my camera and back at him. He quietly nodded consent, I took several photos of him, put my camera down and bowed “Namaste.” Then, he quietly turned his head refusing to let anyone else take his photo.

If my travels have taught me nothing else, it is clear—although the lives of people in other cultures differ from ours, there is a basic sameness in love of family, desire for safety and drive to achieve a comfortable environ-

ment in which to live. I truly believe there is significance to having knowledge of and, hopefully, a better understanding of other cultures.

Many of you who know me, know that my photographic subjects are very eclectic. I often say, “I photograph what catches my eye—what intrigues me—what makes me say, “Oh wow!”

There is so much in this world that intrigues me and yet there are very few countries I have visited that so intrigued me that I have returned. One of those countries is Cuba. Cuba is most certainly a photographer’s delight! It offers incredible color, vibrancy, antiquity and warm, creative people. It is in Cuba where I have been most successful in crossing the language barrier and simply connecting heart to heart with its people. It is the country where I have given and received the most hugs and been made most welcome.

It was on one of my trips to Cuba that I became friends with Pulitzer Prize winning photographer, Essdras M. Suarez. When I met Essdras at NEC-CC, I registered for a photo tour he was leading. Having taken a few other photographer-led tours, I was astonished at his dedication to working with



2018 Cuba/Trinidad: Girl with Iguana

Continued...

Focus on M-J Adelman

(Continued from page 14)

each of the participants helping us improve our photographic skills. Clearly, he was there to teach and assist, not to take his own photos.

Essdras and his wife recently moved to the DC area. When I visited my son (who also lived there), Essdras and I would meet for lunch and chat. At one of these lunches, he asked me if I would consider working with him to develop photographic tours—and that is how EMS Photo Adventures began.

Since then, we have worked diligently both in person and long distance to develop small group, photographic journeys for photographers focused on introducing people to cultures that differ from their own, while being guided to truly see the world and advance their photographic skills.

One of the most rewarding benefits from working with Essdras is my own learning and improvement of my photographic skills. Having worked as a photojournalist for many years, Essdras has supported my desire to photographically “tell it like it is!” Thus, my photographs are subjected to minimal processing and, if another photographer went to the same location, they would be able to see and create the same or similar image.

Do I have a website? Yes, I do!

After my 2000 trip to Africa, I was encouraged by several traveling friends to create a website. Fortunately, at about the same time, as an employee in the New York State Police Planning and Research Department, I had taken on the task of learning how to code in HTML and develop an external website for the New York State Police. A win-win.

Needless to say, much has changed since those days and I finally took that first site down a couple of years ago and turned to PhotoShelter platform to host: AleoPics.com. My stated goal is simply



2019 TNP: Mormon House, Tetons

to share the love of photography and to meet the following objectives:

- To share my travels to countries to which others may never get to travel.
- To give other travel photographers an insight to photo opportunities available in a variety of locations.
- To offer a view of other cultures in order to help expand people’s world view.
- To make available to educators a resource for their students to visually learn about and honor other peoples, countries and environments.
- To assist other photographers in identifying wildlife including animals, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, critters, etc.
- To display my work to those who may be interested in obtaining a signed print or acquiring a copy for other purposes.

Along the way, I have sold matted and framed images and received awards and recognition for my work—all of which is very rewarding—to a point. Yet, I have to share a turning point for me that occurred in a discussion with John Stanmeyer, a *National Geographic* photographer, when he said,

Continued...

Focus on M-J Adelman

(Continued from page 15)

“When it stops being fun, and you are only photographing to sell your work or win awards, it is time to put away the camera!”

On my 45-minute journey home that day, I decided to return to photographing for fun. Thank you, John!

“Take only photos, knowledge and memories.
Leave only footprints, respect and gratitude.”



2020 Annandale, VA: Turkey Fungus
(Trametes Versicolor)

What does the future hold?

Solo plans include returning to Iceland and Greenland next September and spending the better part of October in Madagascar with a possible pre-trip to Kruger National Park, South Africa.

Of course, I will continue to work with Esdras to create fun photo adventures on which to take others and help them see things differently; challenge my web development skills as webmaster for EMS Photo Adventures.com; and expand my own site to include more travel locations and wildlife for identification.

Regardless of all the above, that which is the most importantly and of the highest priority, is enjoy watching my three grandchildren (10, 13 and 13.5) grow up (too fast); continue to appreciate their unique personalities and athletic, musical and artistic talents, and just love them to the moon and back!



Tanzania, Africa:
Feathery Tiger Moth Caterpillar



Tanzania, Africa: Female Lion in Tree

Continued...

Focus on M-J Adelman

(Continued from page 16)



Uganda, Africa: Crested Crane Portrait



Kylemore, Ireland: Castle Rowboat



Viranasi, India: Vishu Holy Man, Portrait



Cambodia, Asia: Aspara Dancer, Hands

Continued...

Focus on M-J Adelman

(Continued from page 17)



Australia: Great Barrier Reef



Greenland: Tasilaq Neighborhood

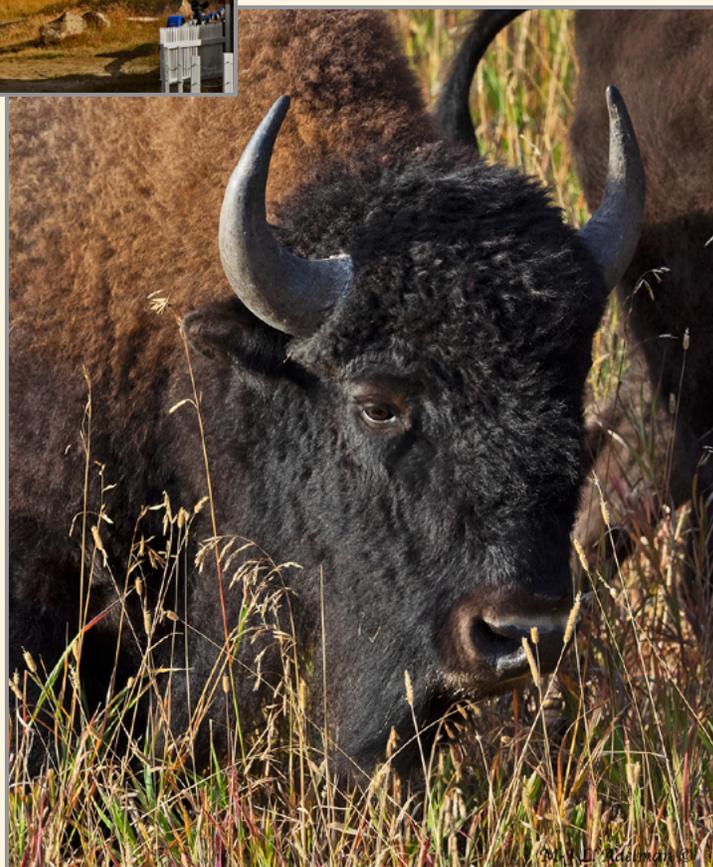
Enjoy more of M-J's images on her website:

<https://www.aleopics.com>

Looking for a photographic adventure?

Check out EMS Photo Adventures:

<https://emspphotoadventures.com/>



Montana Bison, Portrait

OVERCOME YOUR CREATIVE RUT

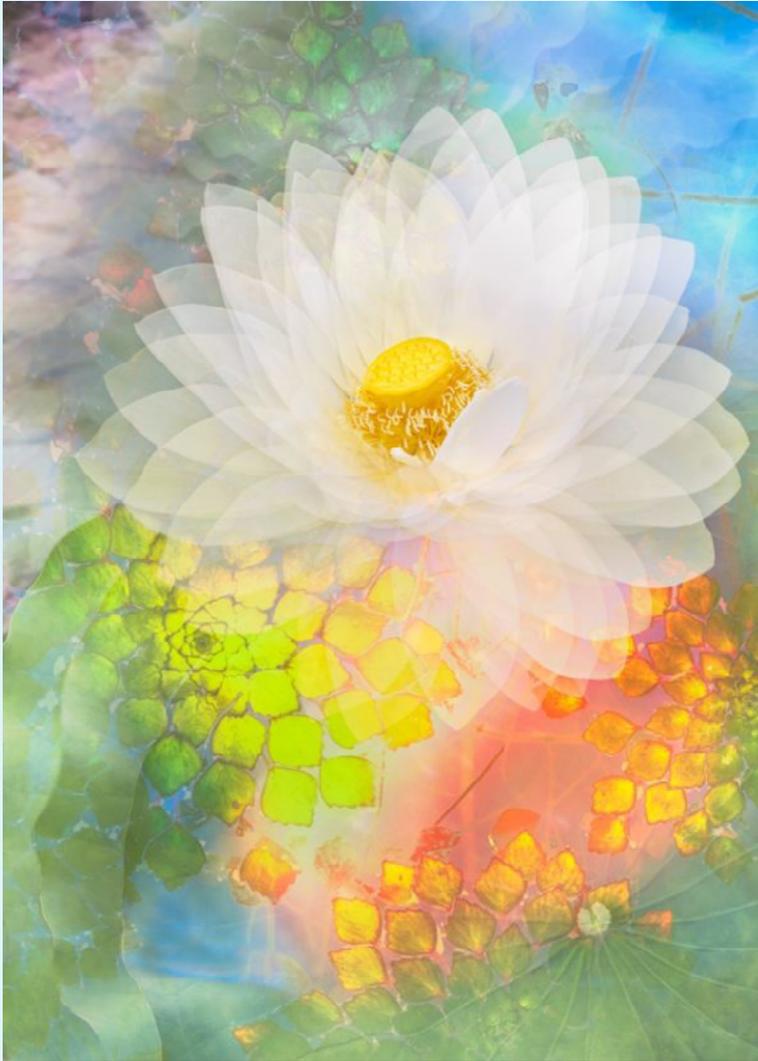
by Jackie Kramer

Reprinted with permission from Jackie Kramer.

Download the original article here, which appeared in Nature Photographers Network:

<https://www.naturephotographers.network/overcome-your-creative-rut/>

Note: The original article includes additional photos not presented here.



Whether your photography is a business or avocation, it's fair to say that photographers are a passionate breed. But what to do when you find your mojo has waned?

Have you ever found yourself in a photographic rut? Wondering where that rush of excitement went to grab your camera and head out to chase the light on the mountainside or the wildflower bloom before it's too late? It can hit the best of us; regardless of one's drive, intentions, success, and stature. If you've ever felt this, know that you're not alone! It's becoming more commonplace lately given the barrage of heavy news, climate change, Covid, geo-political tensions, etc.; pandemic lockdowns; travel restrictions; an oversaturation of virtual offerings; and the effect on print sales for many who sell.

So, what can be done to rekindle your photographic flame? Let's toss around some ideas and, surely, one or more may resonate with you, even if you don't suffer from flagging enthusiasm!

It seems one of the best "restarting" points is to re-connect with your purpose—your authenticity. Why do you shoot? Is it purely for pleasure, business, scientific research, competition, or a combination of any of the aforementioned goals?

What Feeds Your Soul?

Do you seek relaxation, calm, exhilaration, intrigue, or an element of risk?

Do you hearken to the call of wild overgrown places, or do you prefer cultivated gardens? Do you have

more than enough to keep you busy in your backyard, or do you long to travel to faraway places?

Are you most intrigued with chance, accepting unknowns such as weather, pests, or subjects past their prime, or would you rather shoot in a controlled environment?

How do you feel about the technical aspects of the shooting and post-processing?

Do you shoot solo, or do you enjoy the company of other photographers?

Continued...

Overcome Your Creative Rut

(Continued from page 19)

The question each of us must answer is, “What feeds your soul?” Coming from a place of authenticity facilitates the likelihood of sustaining periods of creative drought and understanding how best to and ultimately pull out of it.

Engage in a Community

A sense of community derived from a group of fellow photographers can serve as a force to jumpdrive one’s motivation, whether online or in person. Setting up routine get-togethers to shoot or discuss specific aspects of photography with friends, in person or virtually, is fun and adds a measure of accountability. Sometimes, that’s all it takes to get over a slump.

Online communities, such as Nature Photographers Network (NPN), social media groups, and virtual classrooms also provide indispensable benefits. They typically lay all the groundwork for their members. For example, they lay the foundation and establish a framework; they take steps to attract like-minded photographers, run themes, occasionally host competitions, post informative articles/blogs, and foster interaction between members. It’s always a positive experience when colleagues support each other and show interest in their work.

What can you do right now? Let Boredom Lead the Way

If you’ve shot the same or similar subjects repeatedly and find a sense of boredom kicking in, take that as a cue to ratchet things up a few notches. This is a perfect opportunity to tap into your inner artist and give some thought to how you might change things up.

I lost count of the number of store-bought tulips I shot during 2020, when that was pretty much all I had access to during the initial stages of the pandemic. I tried to vary things up as much as possible using the following techniques:

- Selective focus in my yard
- High Key on Lightpad and window light
- High Key against a white board
- Low Key against black
- Different effects in post-processing



Selective focus



High key image shot against diffused bright window light



Low key image shot against a black background

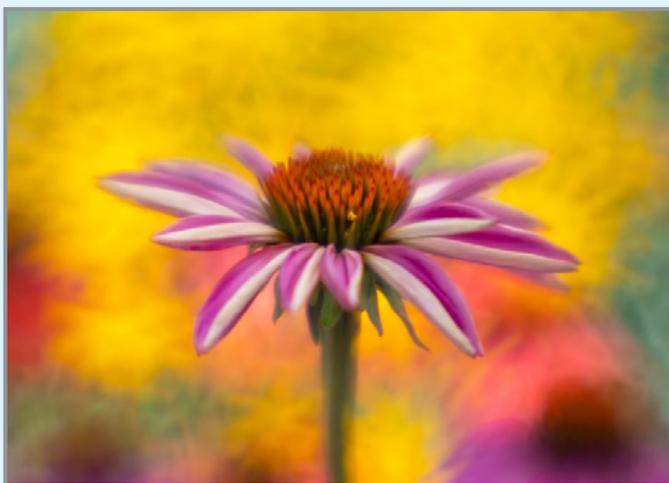
Continued...

Overcome Your Creative Rut

(Continued from page 20)

When I was finally able to travel again (in 2021), I was met with a plethora of Echinacea (coneflowers) in just about every garden from May through September. Gardens were affected by increasing temperatures which caused many species to bloom uncharacteristically early. Punching through the potential boredom of shooting the same flower over and over again, I gave some thought as to how I could approach them differently. Here are some examples of what I did:

- Different lenses, in addition to my Canon 100mm & 180mm macro lenses, I used my Lensbabies, such as the Creative Bokeh optic, the Sweet 50, & vintage Double Glass
- Different vantage points – most notably from underneath shooting toward the sky, but also top-down, which I rarely do.
- Abstracts



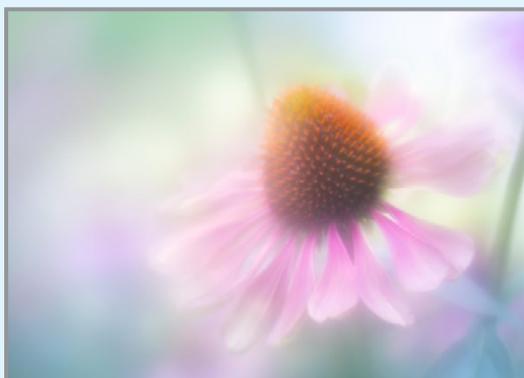
Lensbaby Creative Bokeh Optic



Lensbaby Creative Bokeh Optic



Abstract with Canon 100mm macro



Lensbaby Vintage Double Glass

Post-processing Makeovers

Trying new techniques, such as adding textures or experimenting with Black & White color conversions, can pull you out of the same ol', same ol'. Even if it's a temporary diversion and you go back to your old-style ways, it can help to reset your fun meter and get the juices flowing. This, of course, can be done with new images, as well as images you can reinvent from your archives. It's also something that can be done in any genre.

Continued...

Overcome Your Creative Rut

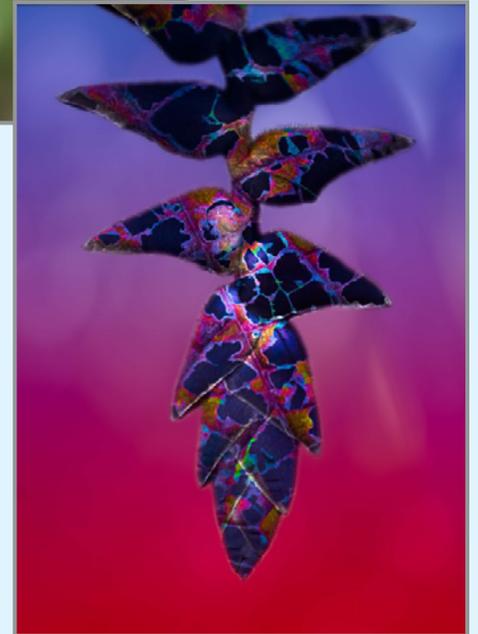
(Continued from page 21)



Removal of distractions and addition of motion blurs on Water Snowflake in Photoshop.
Before (top).
After (bottom).



Artistic edit of Heliconia using textures in Photoshop.
Before (top).
After (bottom).



Accept the Challenge & Spread Good Vibes

Shake it up! Try a new genre perhaps, a new vantage point, a different lens, an interesting edit. Take it out for a spin and share it in a group. Set aside any preconceived notions and let go of expectations; have some fun and see what kind of reactions it receives.

Take time to sprinkle a few kind remarks on others' images, spelling out what resonates with you about them. In the long run, spreading positive reinforcement benefits everyone, from the individual to the whole. When you feel valued and a part of a supportive community, it's much easier to get your "creative" on!

Jackie Kramer

Jackie has been passionate about photography since her dad gave her a camera in high school. Orchids, hibiscus, and bromeliads at Selby Gardens and wading birds at Lido Beach and Longboat Key became Jackie's favorite subjects. Although her photography has expanded to include weddings and portraiture, she remains an avid floral photographer. Jackie teaches individual and group workshops and also maintains an active online group, Phlorography – Artistic Floral Photography, with thousands of passionate floral photographers from around the world. Jackie is committed to supporting other photographers and using photography as a medium to build relationships and enrich others' lives.



<https://www.luvblooms.com/>

NOVEMBER ASSIGNED TOPIC #1

Abandoned Buildings

(Can be inside or outside, but don't put yourself at risk.)

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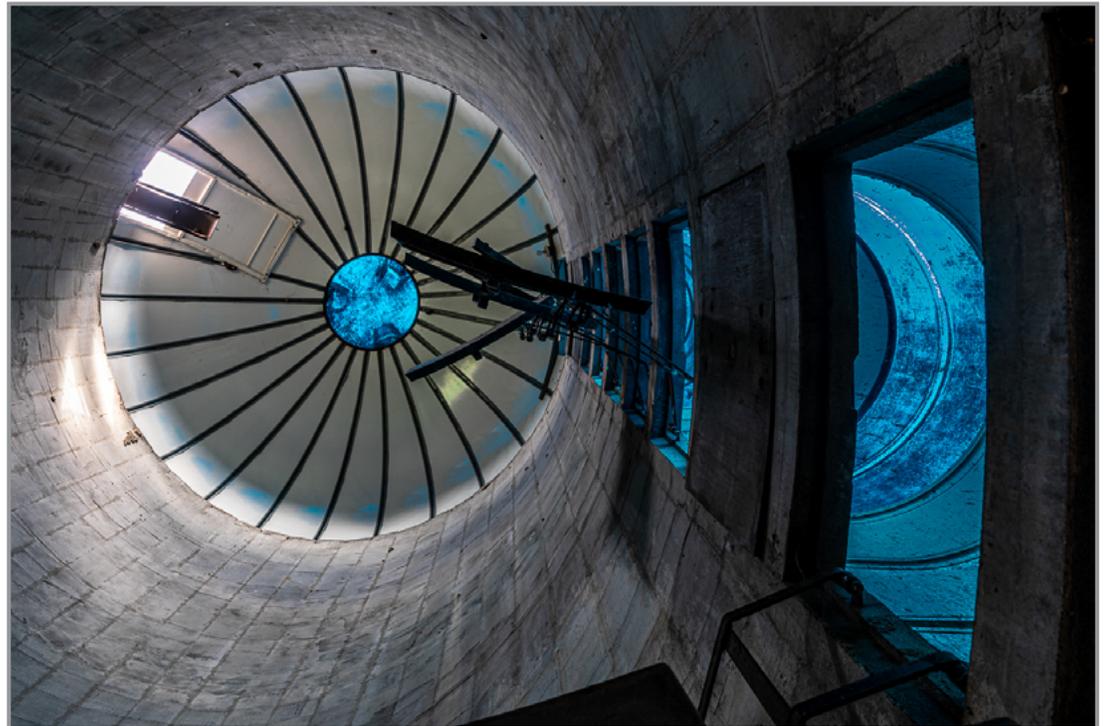
1



First Place: "Forgotten Waterfront"
© Robert Near

JUDGE: Mary Braman

Mary Braman is a Baltimore-based photographer who shoots for her sanity. Her photographic style is simple, and her post-production work is minimal. She has been learning the photographic medium for more than twenty years, and her subjects include landscapes, nature, and people. Recently, she has been working on night shooting. Her work has been featured in the Baltimore Museum of Industry, the annual Baltimore National Heritage Area calendar, and in the MD Photography Alliance Gallery Shows. She also does occasional work for the Baltimore National Heritage Area and a local newspaper, The Peninsula Post. Mary is a core team member of the Charm City Photo Club meetup, serves on the executive council of the Maryland Photography Alliance, and is a Certified MPA Judge.



Second Place: "Abandoned Silo"
© Brian Hoffman

NOVEMBER
ASSIGNED TOPIC #1
Abandoned Buildings

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Third Place:
"Broken Window"
© Ronald Speier



Fourth Place:
"Wild Party Aftermath"
© Sean Sullivan



Fifth Place:
"Abandoned Wiring"
© Brian Hoffman

Check out these winning images
and more competition photos
on our website:

<https://spsphoto.org/>

NOVEMBER ASSIGNED TOPIC #1 Abandoned Buildings

Honorable Mention

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"Staircase"
© Kim Koza



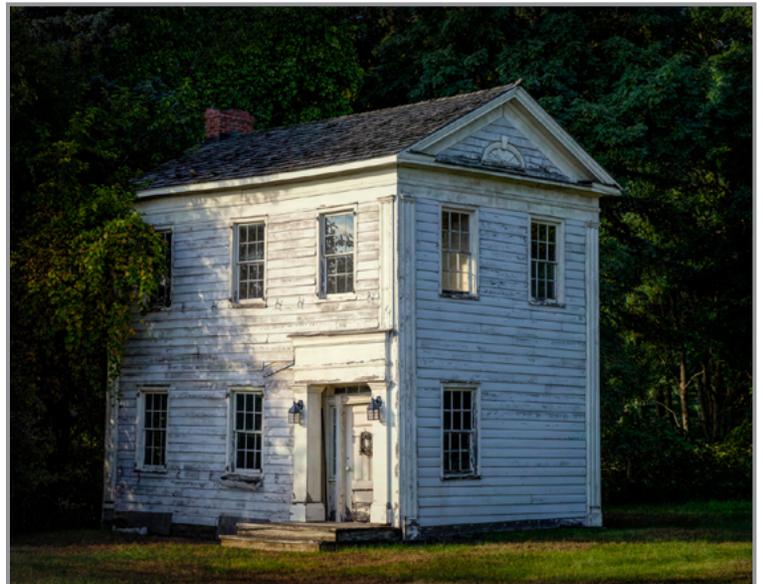
"Concertina"
© Rich Schreiberstein



"Seen Better Days"
© Joe Cotroneo



"Almost Deserted"
© Linda Tommasulo



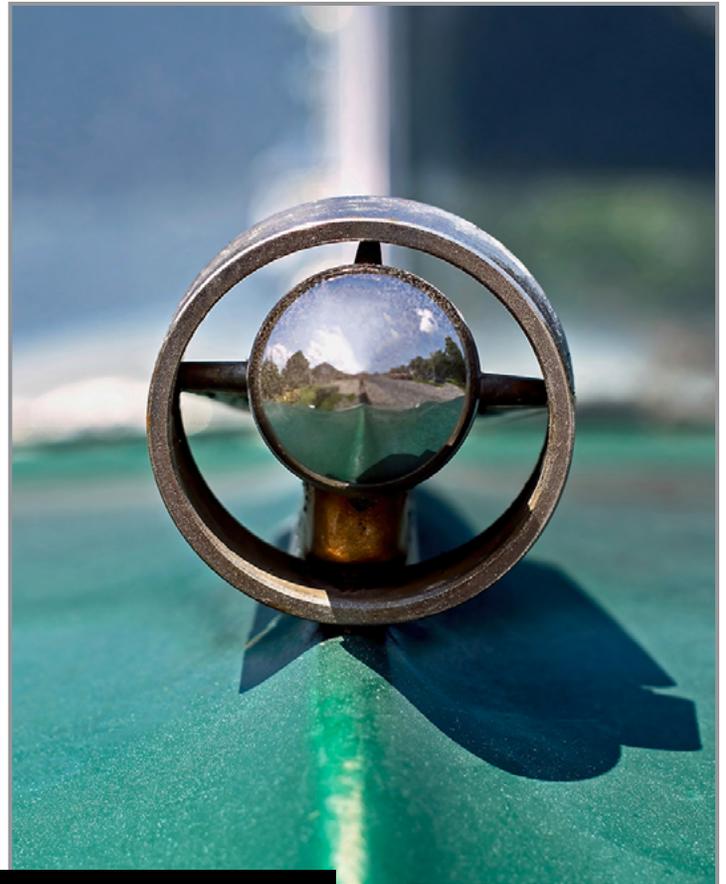
"Old Building in Clifton Park"
© Joe Cotroneo

NOVEMBER ASSIGNED TOPIC #2 Car Parts

(Close up or macro shot of part of a car.)



First Place:
"Hood Ornament"
© Paula Keefe



Second Place:
"On the Nose"
© Elena Keesee



Third Place:
"Dad's Old Parts"
© Kim Koza

Check out these winning images
and more competition photos
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NOVEMBER ASSIGNED TOPIC #2

Car Parts

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Fourth Place:
"Porsche Hood Strap"
© Alan Wiggins



Fifth Place:
"Tail Light"
© Joe Cotroneo

Honorable Mention



"Grille and Light"
© Kim Koza

Continued...

NOVEMBER ASSIGNED TOPIC #2

Car Parts

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"Number 16"
© Robert Near

Honorable
Mention



"Shiny Thing in Orange"
© Sean Sullivan



"Rust Never Sleeps"
© Neil Shapiro



"Camaro"
© Linda Tommasulo

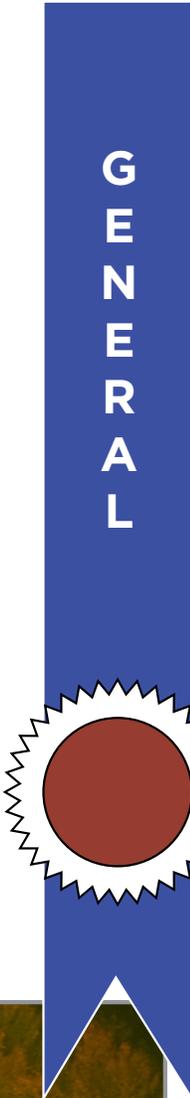
NOVEMBER DIGITAL IMAGE GENERAL



First Place:
"Ivy Island"
© Janet Prichett

JUDGE: Ronald Peiffer
Ron is a lifelong photographer, starting with the family's ancient box camera in the 1950's. In the most recent decade, he has been doing a limited amount of commercial and real estate photography while working to improve his expertise with the camera and with post production. He is also a member at large on the Executive Council of the Maryland Photography Alliance (MPA), which supports the work of nineteen community photography clubs statewide. Certified by the MPA to judge photography competitions and judge club level contests across the region; in the 2017 and 2019 MPA gallery shows, his work has been selected for display.

Second Place:
"Teamwork"
© Thomas Whittemore



NOVEMBER DIGITAL IMAGE GENERAL

GENERAL

Check out these winning images and
more competition photos
on our website:

<https://spsphoto.org/>



Third Place:
"Floral Dancer"
© Robert Near



Fourth Place:
"Transition"
© Neil Shapiro



Fifth Place:
"Interactions"
© Rich Schreiberstein

Continued...

NOVEMBER DIGITAL IMAGE GENERAL

Honorable
Mention

GENERAL



"Fall at Hancock Village" / © Barb Lawton



"Ignatius"
© Phil Olivo



"Dorothy's Shed" / © Kim Koza



"Dahlia Dream"
Robert Near



"Getting a Trim"
Claudia Jakubowski

NOVEMBER DIGITAL IMAGE - MONOCHROME

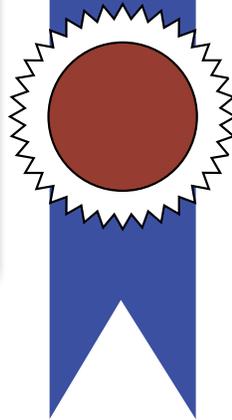


First Place:
"Arlington"
© Linda Tommasulo



Second Place:
"Head On"
© Robert Near

MONOCHROME

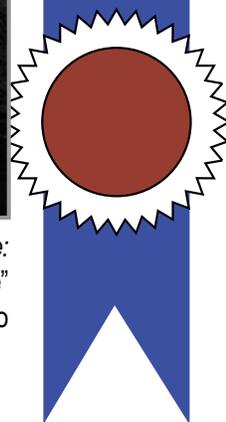


Continued...

NOVEMBER DIGITAL IMAGE MONOCHROME

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Third Place:
"Threesome"
© Neil Shapiro



Fourth Place:
"Coastal Reflections"
© Bill Lanahan



Fifth Place:
"Longwood Garden Beauty"
© Barb Lawton

Continued...

NOVEMBER DIGITAL IMAGE MONOCHROME

Honorable
Mention

MONOCHROME



"Stripes"
© Alan Wiggins



"Gardenia"
© Claudia Jakubowski



"DC Biker"
© Linda Tommasulo



"Look Both Ways"
© Sharon Silversmith



"Shadowgate"
© Rich Schreiberstein

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His usual hours 8:30-5:00pm,
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday.

Leave a message or send an email
(asamiljan@huntsphoto.com),
and he'll get right back to you.



HUNT'S DECEMBER SPECIALS

First and foremost I want to thank you all for your business and support during the past year! As I enter my 49th year in the photo retail industry, I'm thankful for how many of you have become friends as well as loyal customers!

Now through December 30, **Olympus** is offering some great deals, to which I am adding an additional discount. Call me at 781-462-2383 to order:

E-M1X body, now \$1649.99
E-M1 III body, now \$1,449.99
7-14mm f/2.8 PRO, now \$1,249.99
12-100mm f/4 PRO, now \$1,099.99

40-150mm f/2.8 PRO, now \$1,299.99

300mm f/4 PRO, now \$2,699.99

Call me for a special quote on any other Olympus PRO lens not listed here!

Sony has some excellent pricing through December 23:

a7R IV body, now \$2,999.99

a7R III body, now \$1,999.99

FE 12-24mm f/2.8 GM, now \$2,899.99

FE 70-200mm f/2.8 GM OSS, now \$2,299.99

FE 16-35mm f/2.8 GM, now \$1,999.99

FE 200-600mm f/5.6-6.3 G OSS, now \$1899.99

Many more Sony lenses are on special, call me for a quote!

Need a gimbal head for your long lenses? Check out the **Sirui PH-20**, click [here](#) and [here](#). This is one of the best values in a professional, carbon fiber gimbal head! I am offering it on special at just \$319.90, a 20% saving, plus a \$30 mail in rebate. Your final cost, \$289.92! Call me to order yours now! Offer good through December 30.

Nikon has some super specials through December 27:

Z50 2 Lens kit, now \$1,199.95

Z5 body, now \$1,299.95

Z5 body with 24-200mm lens, now \$2,099.95

Z6 body, now \$1,599.95

Z6 body with 24-70mm lens, now \$2,199.95

Z7 body, now \$2,499.95

Z7 body with 24-70mm lens, now \$3,099.95

Z 20mm f/1.8 S lens, now \$949.95

Z 24mm f/1.8 S lens, now \$899.95

Z 85mm f/1.8 S lens, now \$699.95

Z 14-30mm f/4 S lens, now \$1,099.95

Z 14-24mm f/2.8 S lens, now \$2,199.95

Z 70-200mm f/2.8 S lens, now \$2,399.95

Z MC 50mm f/2.8 macro lens, now \$599.95

Please call me at 781-462-2383 with any questions, to request a quote on any other photo gear, or to order. UPS Ground shipping is FREE in the Lower 48 for orders over \$50!

I wish you all a Happy & Healthy
Holiday Season!

Photographically yours, Alan

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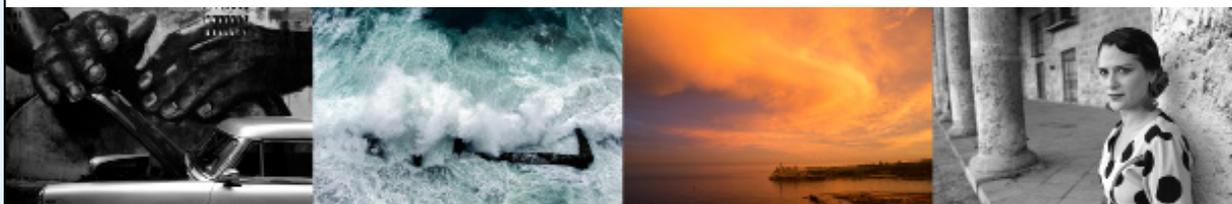
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- Bruce Byers - a professional photographer. A guide with a wealth of photographic knowledge, stories and humor – all at your daily disposal.
- My overall experience as member of the travel/photography workshop was above par. Having a guide with Bruce's skills and background makes for an excellent experience and adventure!

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Membership:
Individual: \$35
Family: \$45
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NOTE: All members will be supplied with links to meeting recordings
(unless prohibited by the presenter).
These links SHOULD NOT be shared to
non-members.

Check out the season calendar on the last page
and see what you're going to miss if you're not a member!

Click here to join/renew:
[https://spsphoto.org/join-the-schenectady-
photographic-society/](https://spsphoto.org/join-the-schenectady-photographic-society/)

ABOUT THE SCHENECTADY PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



For 90 years, the Schenectady Photographic Society has been the meeting place of photographers of all levels—from beginners to serious amateurs to professionals—with the goal of exploring and sharing their love of photography. Members throughout the Capital Region (and beyond, thanks to Zoom!) meet on Wednesday nights to engage in various competitions (digital, photo essay and more), share their vision with like-minded photographers, enjoy guest speaker presentations and other member benefits to further their knowledge, creativity and inspiration.

As part of our monthly competitions, we are challenged with an assigned topic—encouraging participants to venture out of their comfort zones. Members

participating in competitions receive specific commentary and suggestions to take their images to the next level. Don't wish to compete? That's OK too. Observing competitions is always an inspirational and learning experience.

In prior years, occasional field trips gave us the opportunity to expand our photographic vision; frequent exhibits in the local area allowed us to share that vision; and print competitions encouraged us to put our images on paper. All canceled due to COVID, hopefully these will be resumed next season.

The Schenectady Photographic Society is an enthusiastic and energetic group. Our camaraderie is infectious. Check out the calendar on the last page (season runs from late September to mid-May) and join us!

*It's not about being better than everyone else...
it's about being better than you were.*

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Website: www.spsphoto.org

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/schenectadyp photographic society/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/schenectadyp photographic society/>

Instagram: @schenectadyp photographic

THE FOCUS NEEDS YOU! For articles, suggestions, and member profiles (bios/photos).

Contact Linda at newsletter@spsphoto.org.

SCHENECTADY PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY VIRTUAL 2021-2022 SEASON CALENDAR

Note: All competitions are DIGITAL. For Assigned Topics, images must have been taken or after May 1, 2021.

Members may enter a total of four (4) images, no more than two (2) in any one category.

Deadline for submission of digital images is midnight on Saturday (Sunday am) before the competition date—no exceptions!

Click here for more details on the Assigned Topics: <https://spsphoto.org/competitions/assigned-topics/>

Meetings start at 7pm via Zoom. Members will receive appropriate link to sign in via email.

This schedule is always work in progress and is subject to change!

September, 2021

9/29/21.....**Event Night**
Rick Hulbert, "Urban Street Photography"

October, 2021

10/6/21..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Fire
Topic #2: Slow Shutter Speed

10/13/21..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

10/20/21.....**Event Night**
Joan Heffler, "Portrait Composition"

10/27/21..... **Special Event Night**
Bryan Peterson, "The Art of Seeing Adjectives, Not Nouns"

November, 2021

11/3/21..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Abandoned Buildings
Topic #2: Car Parts

11/10/21..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

11/17/21.....**Event Night**
John Barclay, "Dream - Believe - Create"

11/24/21..... **No Meeting (Thanksgiving Eve)**

December, 2021

12/1/21..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Masks
Topic #2: Animals

12/8/21..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

12/15/21.....**Event Night**
Mark Bowie, "Forests: The Art of Photographing Trees and Woods"

12/22/22.....**No Meeting (Christmas Week)**

12/29/21.....**Special Event Night**
Ian Plant, "Visual Design Techniques for Making Stunning Photos"

January, 2022

1/5/22..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Round Things
Topic #2: Perspective

1/12/22..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

1/19/22.....**Event Night**
Hazel Meredith, "Working With Textures and Overlays... Turn Ho-Hum into a Work of Art"

1/26/22.....**Special Event Night**
Jeff Leimbach, "What to Shoot When There's Nothing to Shoot"

February, 2022

2/2/22..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Industrial
Topic #2: Old Everything

2/9/22..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

2/16/22.....**Event Night**
Silvana Della Camera: "The Power of Black & White"

2/23/22..... **Special Event Night**
Lewis Katz, "Perspective & Perception: Searching for the Mind's Eye"

March, 2022

3/2/22..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Silhouettes
Topic #2: Color (Complementary)

3/9/22..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

3/16/22..... **Photo Essay Competition**
Hosted by Dow Smith

3/23/22..... **Special Event Night**
Lisa Cuchara, "Create Fine Art Photographs from Historic Places and Rusty Things"

3/30/22..... **Special Event Night**
Nic Stover, "The Power to Create"

April, 2022

4/6/22..... **Assigned Digital Competition**
Topic #1: Rainy Day
Topic #2: Friendship

4/13/22..... **General/Mono. Digital Competition**

4/20/22..... **Special Creative Competition**
Show us Your Creative Side - Anything Goes!

4/27/22..... **Special Event Night**
Lewis Kemper, "Using Local Adjustment Tools to Take Your Images Beyond Ordinary"

May, 2022

5/4/22..... **Assigned Digital Images of the Year**

5/11/22 **General/Mono/Digital Images of the Year.**

June 15, 2022.....**Awards Banquet???**