

Reflections

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STONY BROOK CAMERA CLUB



© Ed Szymanski

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UP CLOSE WITH THE PRESIDENT



There are many reasons one might join a club. For some, clubs can serve as an opportunity to better oneself, assist in honing a craft, the chance to try something entirely new or maybe it's just a passing fad. Others may join to connect with people with shared interests, make new friends, boost your self-esteem and confidence, and give you a sense of identity and purpose. Maybe you joined a club to further your career. You may want to connect with professionals in your field, learn new skills, or keep up with new gear and the ever-changing technology.

In life, it seems, we tend to gravitate towards people or situations where we are most comfortable. Being part of a club can significantly enhance your quality of life by providing a welcoming environment and a sense of unity. Stony Brook Camera Club is one of the most welcoming groups I have had the pleasure to be a part of. The people I have met are always kind and supportive. Some members I see each and every week in person. I witness friendships being formed, jokes being made and ideas being exchanged. Someone is always ready to help out by offering a hand or friendly advice.

On the flip side, there are some members we may never get to know or meet. Perhaps they are here for educational purposes only to become better photographers or just interested in our competitions to build their portfolios. Luckily for us, staying hybrid has allowed members from all over the country to join our growing community. I am honored to be President of such an amazing group of people. We all have our personal reasons for joining Stony Brook Camera Club, but I do believe that we all share one common reason, and that is for the love and appreciation for PHOTOGRAPHY.

Editors' Letter

By Donna Parker and Tom Amsterburg



"Spring adds new life and new beauty to all that is." – Jessica Harrelson

Spring has arrived, bringing with it longer days, more vibrant colors, and endless opportunities to capture the world in a new light. It's hard to believe how quickly this year has flown by—passing the midpoint of our club's season reminds us just how much we've accomplished and how much more there is to look forward to.

With the promise of nature coming back to full bloom and golden-hour light stretching ever longer, now is the perfect time to grab your camera and explore. Whether it's capturing the delicate details of budding flowers, the energy of outdoor portraits, or the changing landscapes around us, spring offers a fresh canvas for creativity.

As usual, this edition of *Reflections* is itself a reflection of the talent of our members. A special thanks to first-time contributor Josh Simons for his excellent article on the Highlands of Iceland. Thanks also to long-time contributor Joe Kennedy. Joe's essay, "Personal Projects," encourages us to get our creative juices flowing by starting a photography project based around a theme and without any timetable to complete it. We also feature a photo essay of images of the Oregon coast from a recent field trip by SBCC members.

Finally, the editors would like to say a big thank you to everyone who participated in our cover photo contest. It was a tough choice but Ed Szymanski's moody image "Foggy Sunrise," which appears on the cover of this issue, was one of our favorites. We will be selecting the cover for the final issue for this season from among the many other submissions we received.

To provide feedback on *Reflections* or to contribute an article, please send an email to:

Donna Parker (dparker1@me.com) and Tom Amsterburg (tslhusa@comcast.net).

Personal Projects

By Joe Kennedy

“Personal Projects”

One of the more interesting shoots to pull off is a “personal project” or a “pet project!” Let your mind wander about the possibilities out there. There is no timetable to complete this activity. I have been working on several and see no end date in sight.

As I finish off my folder of the buildings of Medfield State Hospital, I thought about other focal



Medfield State Hospital

points. One such Activity came right to mind - “Little Free Libraries” have been popping up all around the world - last count about 175,000 of them in 121 countries!

It all started with Todd H. Bol back in 2009 when he built the first LFL, which was a little red school house dedicated to his mother. She was a former teacher who loved to read.

After seeing the popularity of his front yard lending library, he built



Davis Thayer School, Franklin

more and placed them around his home town of Hudson, Wisconsin. The organization posts a blog offering suggestions on how to get one started and even a store to purchase ready-made ones! I have been impressed with the various styles these “libraries” have taken on. Some have been designed to look like the house behind them.

All you need to do is pull up and take a book from the unlocked box holding who knows what was left inside. There is even a LFL WORLD Map

(<https://littlefreelibrary.org/map/>) that

points out the locations of them. Each LFL has the address listed and a little info on the maker or the reason behind its existence. Whenever I go to visit another area, I do try to make a short list of where they are and their addresses. I think my current collection numbers around fifty (50) of them. So this “pet project “ will be listed

Madison Ave., Quincy



Personal Projects

By Joe Kennedy

Another never-ending project is what I call “Civic Pride.” You may have seen examples of this genre recently as the Town of Franklin was invaded by “Ladybugs” and a small “skulk”



Sunshine Ladybug, Franklin

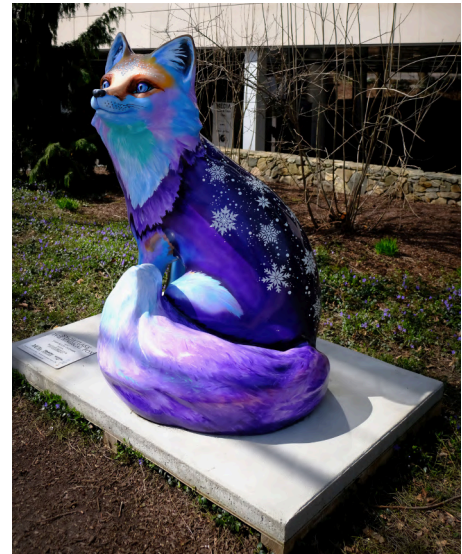


Civic Pride Ladybug, Franklin

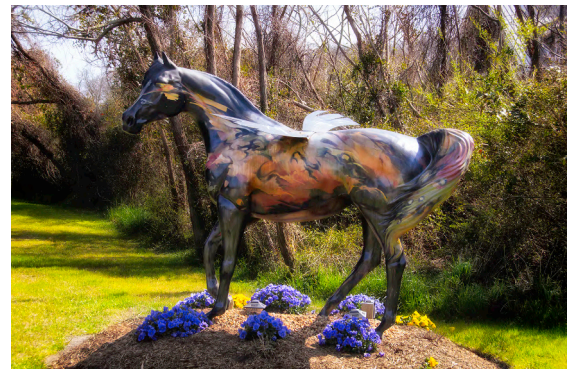
of foxes took residence in Foxboro Center.



Better Together, Foxboro



Snowflake, Foxboro



Pegasus, Duck North Carolina

Personal Projects

By Joe Kennedy

The town officials decide upon a theme and then local artists are invited to design the creature or object. I have come across Guitars in Cleveland; flying horses in Duck, NC; Adirondack chairs in several communities; and recently cows in Boston to raise awareness and funds for the Jimmy Fund! My recent article about murals would definitely fall under the umbrella of “Civic Pride.”

Sand sculptures on the Cape



Rope's End Restaurant, Yarmouth



Capt. Parker's Pub, Yarmouth

My tally stands at about 100 samples of about twenty such subjects.

How about you? Do you have any ongoing projects you would like to share? Drop a line and a pix or two on our FB page!

Thanks for sharing. . .

Congratulations to the NECCC Winners!



© Karen Fitzgerald

Fall Nature
Happy to See Mama
First Place



© Jean DiBattista

Fall Nature
Oyster Catcher Feeding Chick
Honor Award



© Hali Sowle

Winter Nature
Just a Sip
Third Place



© Ellen Kawadler

Winter Nature
Blue-footed Boobie Courtship
Honor Award

By Joe V. Smith

Controlling Backgrounds in Nature Photography

by Joe V. Smith

You just returned from a successful photo shoot with perfect pictures of your favorite animal. Everything came together – pleasing subject, great light, excellent composition, perfect exposure, sharp focus and no camera blur. But when you look at your images you see a problem you missed in the field—distracting backgrounds, often so distracting that your image(s) become useless. So, what can the photographer do to fix or minimize a background problem? One fix, rarely practical, is to drive to a different location with a better background – one that is smooth, has even tonality and pleasing and complementary colors and no distractions from natural or manmade items. You want to end up with an image like this:

Nikon D810; Aperture Mode; Nikon 300mm f4E pf lens; f4;
1/250; ISO 350; AF-C; Single point AF; Auto ISO; on monopod.



Controlling Backgrounds in Nature Photography

By Joe V. Smith

I got close to the bird and the building in the background was at least 300-500 yards away so it has almost disappeared. Morning light was overcast so light was soft and colors were rich. Tonality was uniform with no distracting highlights or bright spots. I used a slow shutter speed and shot wide open to keep the ISO as low as possible to avoid noise. Shooting wide open helps to blur the background. I used a monopod to keep my shooting platform as stable as possible. (I do admit that a little morning sunlight just touching the feathers would enhance the feather details and would likely improve the image, but lighting enhancements are for another time!)

Field Fixes

Here are some things you can do on site with your existing equipment without resorting to changing locations.

1. **Vary Distance – increase the distance between the subject and its background.** Details in backgrounds will become less visible as the distance between the subject and background increases. This can work when setting up a bird feeder or perch in your backyard, but rarely helps when photographing native subjects in natural habitats. Use this technique in planning your shot. The raptor center where I took all of the pictures in this article is in an urban setting with short distances between the subject and backgrounds. Perch locations are chosen very carefully for photo raptor shoots. Perches are moved during the year to adapt to changing habitat and backgrounds.
2. **Vary Distances – shorten the distance between the photographer and the subject.** Move closer to the subject. This makes the subject more prominent in the image and reduces the impact of distracting things in the background.

The only difference between the next two images is that I got closer to the Great Horned Owl in the second vertical image.

In the first image, shooting wide open at f2.8 helped a bit, but did not resolve the problem. The background is very distracting. Cropping in post processing would not have fixed it.

The real fix was getting closer by using my feet! In the second image (next page), the bird fills a larger portion of the frame, the disturbing background features in the first image are not present and the background is more pleasingly rendered.

For both images, my camera was a Nikon D850; the lens a Nikon 300mm f/2.8G at f/2.8; Exp comp -7; ISO 64; 1/800; Aperture mode; AF-C; AF Single point; Matrix; Auto ISO, on monopod, no cropping or post processing.

There is no magic camera button, custom setting or post processing workflow that will fix bad backgrounds. Your knowledge and use of light, habitat, nature subjects and your equipment allow you to anticipate the likely problems and choose the correct camera, lens and techniques to produce impactful images with clean and pleasing backgrounds.



Nikon D850; the lens a Nikon 300mm f/2.8G at f/2.8; Exp comp -7; ISO 64; 1/800; Aperture mode; AF-C; AF Single point; Matrix; Auto ISO, on monopod

Controlling Backgrounds in Nature Photography

By Joe V. Smith



Nikon D850; the lens a Nikon 300mm f/2.8G at f/2.8; Exp comp -7; ISO 64; 1/800; Aperture mode; AF-C; AF Single point; Matrix; Auto ISO, on monopod

If this article piques your interest, read photo articles on related topics – Depth of Field and Hyperfocal distance. Or Google Depth of Field vs. Focus Distance.

photopills.com/articles/depth-of-field-guide
photographylife.com/what-is-depth-of-field

3. Shorten the apparent distance between the photographer and the subject.

The photographer remains in place but increases the focal length of a zoom lens or changes the lens to one with a longer focal length.

The only difference between the next two images (below and on next page) is that I changed the focal length of the zoom lens from 200mm to 350mm. The lens on my Nikon Z9 was a Nikon Z mount 100-400mm f/4.5-f/5.6 S lens. Change in focal length impacted light metering and final exposures. No processing or cropping was applied to either image.

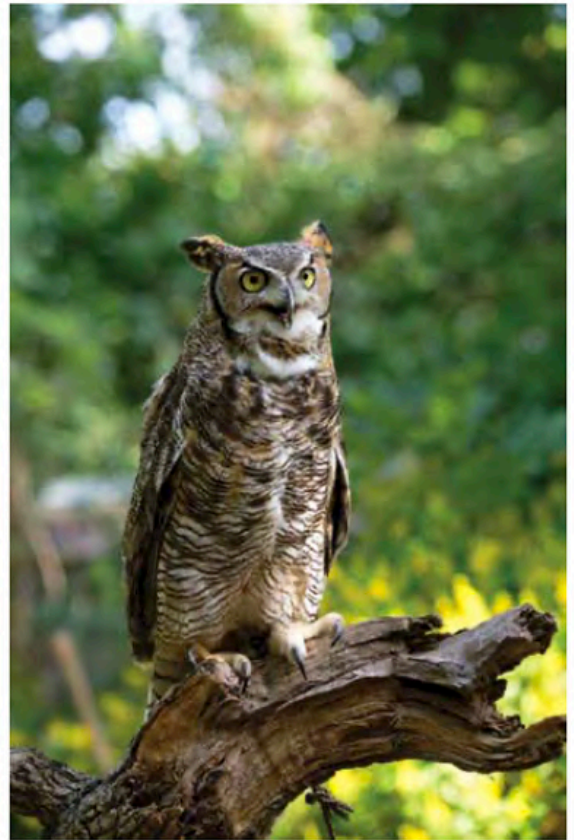
The impact on the background is dramatic. In the second image, the uniform soft green bokeh is what you want to achieve. It is much better than the busy and distracting background in the first image. (If I had to do this shot over again, I would have taken the second image as a vertical.)

4. Change the f stop on the lens – use a wide f stop like f/2.8 or f/4 and not f/8 or f/11 and the background may appear to be smoother. This technique used by itself rarely will completely resolve a distracting background. But when used with items 2 or 3 above, it can further improve a background.

Remember that when you widen the f stop you shorten the depth of field, other things the same. If you want both the eye and beak to be in sharp focus you may need to narrow the aperture or move farther away from the bird. You need to understand the tradeoffs between smoother backgrounds and shorter depth of field when choosing a wider aperture (smaller f stop number.)

5. Once in place, shift your position. Take your shots. Then move left or right a few inches or a few feet. The background rendering will change especially with longer focal length lenses. Hot spots or distracting twigs or limbs may disappear or appear. Getting lower can have a huge impact on backgrounds too, and will improve the composition. Getting eye to eye with your subject should be your goal. Changing the f stop will impact things too.

With my Nikon Z9 mirrorless camera, subtle changes like those described above can be viewed in real time on the Z9's EVF (electronic view finder) before the shutter is triggered. Having the dynamic range available to you in the EVF is a game changer for me. I just need to train my brain to use it to its fullest capabilities.



Nikon Z9; ISO 3200; f/7.1; 1/1000; 200mm; Aperture mode; AF-C; 3D Tracking; Auto ISO; matrix

Controlling Backgrounds in Nature Photography

By Joe V. Smith



Nikon Z9; ISO 3600; f/7.1; 1/1000; 350mm; Aperture mode; AF-C; 3D Tracking; Auto ISO; matrix

Summary

There is no magic camera button, custom setting or post processing workflow that will fix bad backgrounds. Your knowledge and use of light, habitat, nature subjects and your equipment allow you to anticipate the likely problems and choose the correct camera, lens and techniques to produce impactful images with clean and pleasing backgrounds. As a former 35mm slide film shooter I try hard to “get it right in the camera” and avoid post processing “fixes” like cropping even with large megapixel files and blurring a background. Picking the right camera, lens and focal length coupled with changing your distance to the subject is a much better approach.

The first rule you should follow is to use every pixel on your camera’s sensor that is available to you. Fill the frame with what you want in your mind’s final rendering before you push the shutter button. If that means using a crop sensor camera, then use it. Pick a different lens, or change the focal length or change your distance. Using a full frame camera and cropping away 50% of the image is usually a poor practice, but an easy one to fall into.

My Nikon Z mount 100-400mm f/4.5-f/5.6 S lens is my first wildlife zoom tele lens. I am still learning the best way to use it along with my Nikon 500mm f/5.6 pf lens and my 300mm prime lenses for nature subject images. I have a Nikon 70-200mm lens, but use it mostly for habitat with nature subject captures. With any wildlife zoom or prime lens, you should take test images against the same background. For each zoom lens, vary the focal lengths, f stops and distances from the subjects. For each prime lens, vary the f stops and distances from the subjects. View all of the resulting images to see what combinations produce the background you are looking for. Make notes on what works well and use this information when in the field. Always practice, and remember to take different images at different settings.

All images were taken by the author at the Houston Audubon Raptor & Education Center in 2021 or 2022. The Great Horned Owl, Simon, and Pierre, the rufous-morph Eastern Screech Owl, are two of their captive education raptors. If you are close by come visit it and enjoy the birds and attend a Raptor Shoot. houstonaudubon.org/sanctuaries/raptor-center.html

Joe V. Smith, began his photography career when he was 13 with a Bosley 35mm camera, a Rolleicord twin lens reflex camera and a photo class at Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. He started with black and white film (exposing, developing and printing), then 35mm and 120 color slide and print film and now Nikon DSLRs and mirrorless cameras and Nikon lenses. Today he shoots with his Nikon D500, D850 and Z9.



He is self-taught in nature photography and has been a winning photographer in five Coastal Bend Wildlife Photo Contests, 2001-2009. In 2002, he finished in the top 25% of all photographers in the 2002 Valley Land Fund Photo Contest with three prize winning class pictures.

Joe is a member of the Houston Audubon Nature Photographers Association, Houston Photochrome Club, Houston Center for Photography, Houston InnerLoop Photo Club, Houston Photo Study Group and the Photographic Society of America. He was President of the Houston Photochrome Club in 2004-2005 and 2009-2010. He judged the annual competition of the Chinese Photographic Society in 2004. Joe has taught introductory photography seminars and classes for seventh and eighth graders at various schools in Houston, TX. He has presented numerous photography programs for Birds and Blooms, Houston Audubon and other organizations in the greater Houston area. He has had his images published in *Houston Wilderness' Atlas of Biodiversity*, *Progressive Farmer* and *Thomson Safari Catalogue*, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015.

**Controlling Backgrounds in Nature
Photography**

© Joe V. Smith

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2025 Multi-Club Competition

Multi-Club Competition – May 8, 2025

Boston, Gateway, Newton and Stony Brook Camera Clubs

All members of the Boston, Gateway, Newton and Stony Brook Camera Clubs are invited to participate in the friendly 6th Annual Multi-Club Competition to be hosted online on May 8, 2025.

All images must be created within a one-year period beginning April 1st, 2024 and ending March 31st, 2025.

Members may choose to submit digital photographic images in any or all of the eight categories detailed below.

Category	Definition
1. Birds in the Human Environment	Send us your birds! This is your chance to capture images of these beautiful creatures in human spaces. The “nature story” sought after in typical competitions will not help you. Don’t worry about hand-of-man; that’s what we’re looking for! Photos here should show how birds live among us – a gull grabbing your French fries, or pigeons crowding a sidewalk. Just make sure a bird or birds is the subject.
2. Clouds	Forget those clear blue skies; give us clouds! Listen to Joni Mitchell and head out to shoot them – cirrus, cumulus or even altocumulus! Other objects can be in the frame, but it needs to be clear that clouds are the subject. Although fog might be considered a cloud of sorts, we’re sorry to say it doesn’t fall into this category.
3. Environmental Portrait	Environmental portraiture shows subjects in a setting that reveals details of their lives and illuminates the essence of their personality. This might be the subject’s home or place of work, but locations outside the subject’s normal environment can provide a fresh perspective. It’s all about context. Where is this person? Why is this person in this place? How do they relate to the place where they are?
4. Night Photography – People and Places	<p>Let’s get you out shooting at night. You can shoot anywhere – urban, suburban, landscape, etc. – as long as it’s between the hours of dusk and dawn. But no star trails, Milky Ways, or other night sky shots and no sunrises, sunsets or eclipses. Instead, we want to see people and/or places in your shots.</p> <p>You might take inspiration from the painter Edward Hopper, who was most admired for his night scenes. Check out his work. He adapted the device of highlighting a scene against a dark background, creating the sense of sitting in a darkened theater waiting for the drama to unfold. By staging his pictures in darkness, Hopper was able to illuminate the most important features while obscuring extraneous detail.</p>
5. Perspective	<p>Perspective refers to the visual connection between the elements in a photo. It may involve the angle from which the image is taken, the composition of the subject(s) within the frame and how the photographer positions themselves during the photographing process. A recent article states that perspective is not only an effective way of making a photo more captivating, it’s also an opportunity to challenge the way people see the world. With a skilled eye, you can show a unique view of the most commonly photographed subjects.</p> <p>Keeping the above in mind, try applying various perspective techniques, including Linear, High Angle, Low Angle and Leading Lines, to name a few. This is also an opportunity to experiment with lenses and filters, as well as to take advantage of light and shadows, but make sure you have fun doing so. Try to create some drama in your photographs. Let creativity take hold in the field.</p>

2025 Multi-Club Competition

Multi-Club Competition – May 8, 2025
Boston, Gateway, Newton and Stony Brook Camera Clubs

Category	Definition
6. Selective Focus	Selective focus leaves one part of the image sharp and the rest blurry. Choosing a pinpoint focal point in your image and using a shallow depth of field is a technique you can use to simplify an image, eliminating distractions and drawing the viewer's attention to the most important portion of your shot.
7. The Thrill of Victory, The Agony of Defeat	Starting in 1961, ABC's Wide World of Sports ran for 37 seasons, providing a weekly digest of sports' major events. The show's opening sequence featured a dramatic fanfare and a voice-over intro that went, <i>"Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sport... the thrill of victory... and the agony of defeat... the human drama of athletic competition... This is ABC's Wide World of Sports!"</i> while showing a video montage of dramatic winners and losers — a heroic athlete being carried from the field, a weightlifter raising an impossible weight over his head and, most memorably, a ski jumper crashing horribly off the end of the jump. Though sports may be the best venue for capturing these images of human drama, you can also capture displays of victory celebrations or disappointment at defeat in other venues for this category — games, child's play, political rallies, etc. — as long as the emotion is there!
8. Trees	Trees come in all sizes and shapes, have unique leaves, flowers and fruit. In winter, the bare branches provide opportunities for silhouettes. Light, color and shadow are important elements. Submit an image in which the tree or trees is the main subject.

Members from the clubs will be assigned to either Class A (advanced) or B (beginner and intermediate) in Multi-Club to give all photographers a chance to compete fairly with others at a similar level of experience and skill. Next April, each club will select a single final image in each category and class to compete in the event. Only one image per member may be submitted to the finals, allowing 16 members from each club (8 categories x 2 classes) to compete.

Multi-Club will once again be judged by a distinguished panel of three judges independent of the clubs. The judges will offer their comments on all finalist images, especially focused on stressing each image's impact in communicating the category definition. Awards will be given to the best image in each class/category based on the judges' rankings. Club awards will be given for best total placement across all categories in Class B, Class A and Overall. Finally, at the end of the competition, the judges will also each choose a Judge's Favorite for each class, across all categories, for a total of up to 22 individual awards (16 category winners and up to 3 across all categories in both Class B and Class A).

Oregon Coast

By Ginny Castro, Silvana Della Camera, Dan Gyves



A lone tree at the overlook for Cannon Beach
© Ginny Castro



The Oregon Coast is dotted with rock outcroppings
© Ginny Castro



Bandon Beach featured interesting
sea stacks like Face rocks
© Ginny Castro



Another stunning view driving along the
coast, sea stacks where everywhere
© Ginny Castro



Waiting for sunset at Brandon Beach
© Ginny Castro

CONTRIBUTION

Oregon Coast

By Ginny Castro, Silvana Della Camera, Dan Gyves



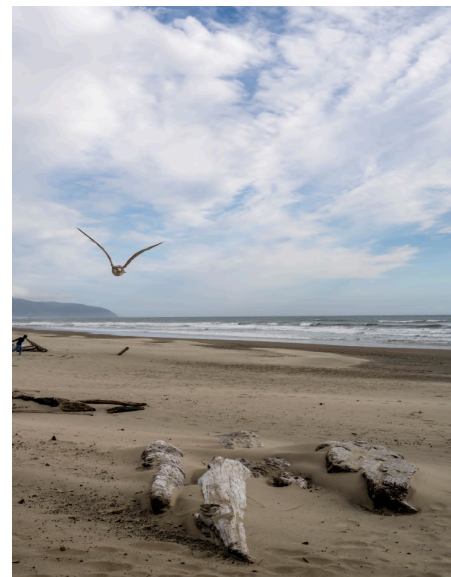
Bandon Beach ©
Dan Gyves



Latourell Falls
© Dan Gyves



Visit House at Sunset
© Dan Gyves



Oregon Coast View
© Dan Gyves



Ecola Point Overlook
© Dan Gyves

CONTRIBUTION

Oregon Coast

By Ginny Castro, Silvana Della Camera, Dan Gyves



Multnomah Falls
© Silvana Della Camera



Shepperd's Dell Falls
Columbia River Gorge
© Silvana Della Camera



The Vista House,
Columbia River Gorge
© Silvana Della Camera



Sunset Over Yaquina
Point Lighthouse
© Silvana Della Camera



Photographer Caught in
the Act, Bandon Beach
© Silvana Della Camera

CONTRIBUTION

Shutter Snap Challenge

By Tom Amsterburg

1. What is “blue hour” in photography?
 - a) Setting the color temperature of a camera’s white balance at 9000K or higher
 - b) A brief period of time when birds, confused by the shifting light, momentarily hover in place
 - c) The period of time just before sunrise or after sunset when the sun dips below the horizon
 - d) The time that occurs one hour before the end of a scheduled photo shoot when your camera battery dies
2. If the camera is giving a “correct” exposure at aperture = f/8, shutter = 1/60, and ISO = 100, what should the shutter speed be changed to if you put on a 5-stop Neutral Density filter?
 - a) Shutter = 1/2
 - b) Shutter = 1/20
 - c) Shutter = 1/180
 - d) Shutter = 1/2000
3. What does negative space mean?
 - a) An optical illusion where the part of the photo where there is *nothing* somehow becomes the most meaningful thing
 - b) That part of an image where the camera’s autofocus has simply given up
 - c) The empty space around the main subject of an image
 - d) Negative space refers to the completely dark areas of an image, such as shadows or unlit backgrounds
4. Which one of following people is a famous street photographer?
 - a) Vivian Maier
 - b) Blanche DuBois
 - c) Gretchen Whitmer
 - d) Stella Kowalski
5. What is exposure bracketing?
 - a) Taking multiple exposures at different focal lengths
 - b) A technique used only in black and white photography to balance contrast
 - c) A way to create panoramic images same scene with varying exposures

Shutter Snap Challenge

By Tom Amsterburg

- d) A technique where you take multiple shots of the same scene with varying exposures
- 6. What is an aspect ratio?
 - a) Refers to how large the subject appears in relation to the background elements
 - b) The proportional relationship between an image's width and height
 - c) A calculation based on how far the subject is from the camera
 - d) The ratio of horizontal to vertical lines in a composition
- 7. What is color temperature
 - a) The temperature at which a camera sensor operates
 - b) A setting the controls the warmth of an image by adjusting the camera's internal heating
 - c) A measure of how much sunlight is present in a scene
 - d) Refers to the relative warmth or coolness of a light source, measured in degrees Kelvin (K)
- 8. What is the difference between "hard" light and "soft" light?
 - a) Hard light is always natural, and soft light is always artificial
 - b) Hard light can only be created with small light sources, while soft light comes from large ones
 - c) Hard light creates strong shadows and high contrast, while soft light produces softer shadows and is more diffused.
 - d) Hard light is typically used for high key photography, and soft light is used for low key photography
- 9. What is Rembrandt lighting?
 - a) Rembrandt lighting is achieved by placing a single light directly in front of the subject to create a well-lit face
 - b) A lighting technique that typically uses a single light source positioned at a 45-degree angle to create a dramatic look, with a distinct triangle of light under one eye
 - c) A symmetrical lighting pattern that creates an evenly lit face, with no noticeable light to shadow transitions
 - d) Rembrandt lighting requires 2 light sources to produce a balanced, contrasting effect on the subject
- 10. What does noise refer to in photography?
 - a) Noise is the visual distortion in a photo caused by defects or imperfections in the camera lens
 - b) Noise is the visual blur caused by motion during exposure
 - c) Noise occurs when the light in a scene fluctuates unpredictably, causing a grainy texture in the image
 - d) Image noise is the random variation of brightness or color information in images

The Highlands of Iceland

By Josh Simons

I fell in love with Iceland's Highlands about five years ago and left the coast with all of its admittedly beautiful sights in the rearview mirror of my rented Land Rover. I've never looked back.

At first I was attracted by the adventure of traveling in a wild, undeveloped wilderness — learning how to ford rivers safely, negotiating crazy rough ways, and following any track that struck my fancy to see what I could see. What I saw was incredible — by turns majestic, awe-inspiring, and so completely jaw-dropping that trying to capture the Icelandic Highlands photographically has become my passion. In truth, it goes beyond photography. Roni Horn speaks eloquently for me in her book *Island Zombies: Iceland Writings*:

"I returned to Iceland with migratory insistence and regularity. The necessity was part of me. Iceland was the only place I went without cause, just to be there."

To understand the appeal, understand this: Geologically, Iceland was born yesterday. It arose from volcanic action and continues to grow because it sits atop two tectonic plates that are pulling apart on a diagonal line through the middle of the country — right through the Central Highlands. This is the fire of the Land of Fire and Ice. Iceland is also home to Europe's second largest ice cap as well as numerous other glaciers, which currently cover about a tenth of the country. In prior Ice Ages, ice coverage was much more extensive. This mix of fire and ice has created a unique landscape for photographers. Eruptions and lava flows have contributed towering mountains, vast lava fields filled with phantasmic outcrops, and volcanic craters of all sizes, shapes, and colors. Glaciers have carved the landscape and, because many of Iceland's volcanoes are buried deep under glacial ice, the vast floods of meltwater have carved deep valleys and gorges across the country. In addition, because all of this happened (and continues to happen) so recently in geological time, there is a knife-edged roughness everywhere that adds incredible drama to the landscape. The predominant palette is set by the very dark tones of lava and the incredible greens of mosses that add pattern and texture throughout. Volcanic activity has added additional layers of mineral color that really need to be seen in person to be believed — vivid reds and yellows are often seen in crater walls, for example.

I've been visiting the Highlands annually for several years, trying to capture an inkling of what I feel when experiencing these landscapes. I've shot with phones, compact cameras, M43, full frame, and medium format. *one*, and from small planes. I hope you enjoy this sample of my images from the Icelandic Highlands.

The Highlands of Iceland

By Josh Simons



Einhyrningur (Unicorn Mountain) on Emstruleið Road (F261). An iconic sight when heading deeper into the Highlands from the south. iPhone 11 Pro Max.



Viti Crater at Askja. When I started my hike, it was sunny. When I arrived, the weather was starting to change with snow in the distance. On my return, I was in a full-fledged blizzard. Canon 5D Mk IV, 16mm, 1/125 @ f/11.

The Highlands of Iceland

By Josh Simons



Laki is an area full of crater rows like this one. It is very picturesque, but its history is anything but happy: A nine-month eruption in this area in the 18th century killed more than half the country's livestock and more than a fifth of its human population.

I turned *down* the red saturation to make it look more plausible — after a rain the colors can be incredibly intense. Shot from a small plane with Canon 5D Mk IV, 66mm, 1/1000 @ *f*/5.6.

Tip: The best approach for such aerial shooting is to set a fast enough speed for sharpness while flying and whatever *f*-stop is the sweet spot for your lens. Let the ISO float to get a proper exposure.

The Highlands of Iceland

By Josh Simons



Rauðafoss is an unusual waterfall, accessible via a very pretty hike with some amazing vistas. Sony RX100 VII, 39mm, 1/25 @ *f*/11.



Skuggnisvatn. While I shot this from a small plane, I have also driven to the lake outlet and flown my drone. There are many beautiful features in this area, but it is difficult to access. Canon 5D Mk IV, 44mm, 1/1000 @ *f*/8.0.

The Highlands of Iceland

By Josh Simons

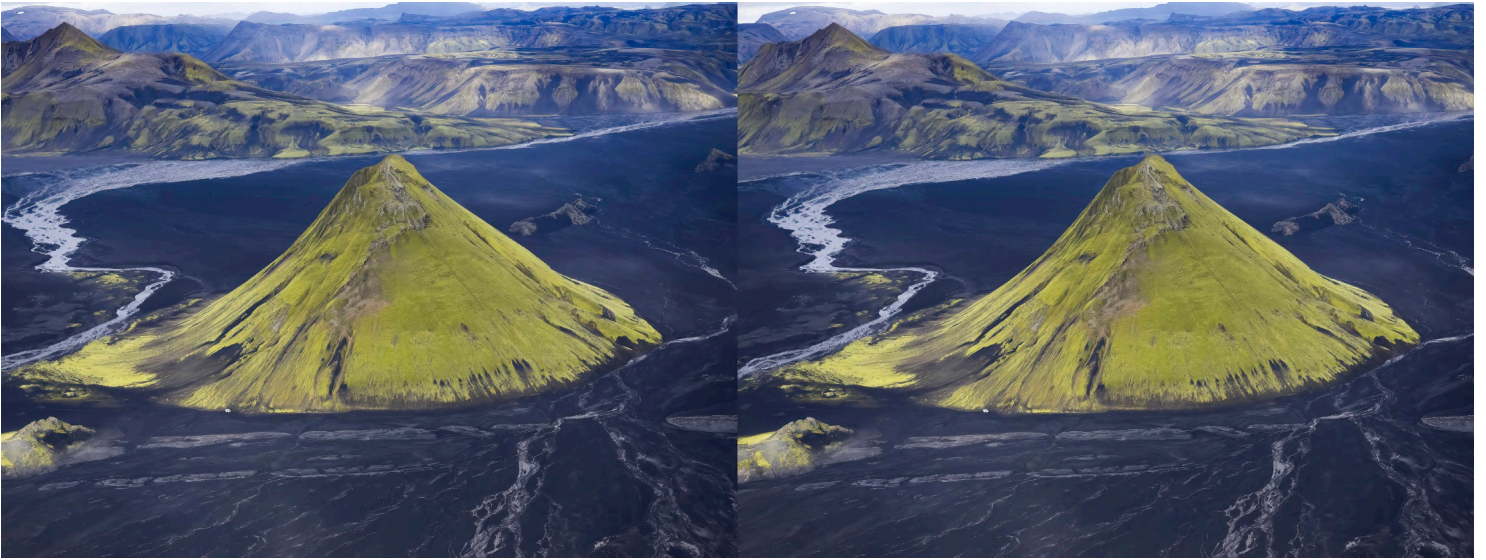


Markarfljótsgljúfur Canyon. Author self-portrait for scale. This canyon dwarfs the more familiar Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon on the south coast, being about twice as deep (200m) and four times as long. DJI Mini Pro 3, 24mm, 1240 “ *f*/1.7.

Finally, here are a few hyper-stereo shots for those who enjoy 3D photography. By shooting a sequence of photos when the plane is flying level, one can select the left and right eye image to give appropriate separation for a good 3D effect.

The Highlands of Iceland

By Josh Simons



Mælifell. A very popular and identifiable mountain in the Central Highlands. Sony RX100M7, 60mm, 1/000 @ *f*/4.0.



Unknown location. This is representative of the sorts of sweeping vistas one can commonly see in the Highlands. Sony RX100M7, 35mm, 1/1000 @ *f*/3.5.



PSA Photo Gathering

2025

September 24 through 27 2025, in Portland, Oregon

<https://psaphotoworldwide.org/page/future-festivals>

Answers to Shutter Snap Challenge

1. c 2. a 3. c 4. a 5. d 6. b 7. d 8. c 9. b 10. d

Stony Brook Camera Club 2024- 2025 Meeting Schedule

Date	Club Topic	Presenter	Venue
9/5/24	Opening Night/Business Meeting	Members	Hybrid
9/12/24	Image Study	Ray Guillette	Hybrid
9/19/24	Minimalism	Denise Silva	Zoom
9/26/24	Making Competitive Nature Images	Rick Cloran	Zoom
10/3/24	Competition		Zoom
10/10/24	Image Study	Ray Guillette	Hybrid
10/17/24	Seascape Photography	Nancy Orbe	Zoom
10/24/24	Macro photography	Mike Moats	Zoom
10/31/24	Judges Point of View	David, Silvana	Zoom
11/7/24	Competition		Hybrid
11/14/24	Image Study	Ray Guillette	Zoom
11/21/24	Making Compelling Images at Events	Ray Schneider	Zoom
11/28/24	Thanksgiving Day	Closed	Closed
12/5/24	Competition		Zoom
12/12/24	Photography & Principles of Art and Design	Richard Bernabe	Zoom
12/19/24	Galapagos	Ellen Kawadler	Hybrid
12/26/24	Holiday Break	Closed	Closed
1/2/25	Holiday Break	Closed	Closed
1/9/25	Competition		Hybrid
1/16/25	Image Study	Ray Guillette	Hybrid
1/23/25	Landscape Technique, Vision, Processing	Nic Stover	Zoom
1/30/25	Oregon	Dan Gyves et al	Hybrid
2/6/25	Competition		Zoom
2/13/25	Concert Photography	Jake Jacobsen	Hybrid
2/20/25	Architecture	Joe Readon	Zoom
2/27/25	New Member Showcase	Cynde Cusack	Hybrid

Stony Brook Camera Club 2024 - 2025 Meeting Schedule

3/6/25	Competition		Hybrid
3/13/25	Image Study	Ray Guillette	Zoom
3/20/25	Cabin Fever	Amy Letourneau	In person
3/27/25	Talk Photography	Faith Martin	Zoom
4/3/25	Competition		Zoom
4/10/25	The Connection Between Art & Craft	Freeman Patterson	Zoom
4/17/25	Black and White Photography	Geff Bourke	Zoom
4/24/25	SIG	Members	Zoom
5/1/25	Image of the Year		Hybrid
5/8/25	Multi-Club		Hybrid
5/15/25	Mastering the Light	Greg Basco	Zoom
5/22/25	Editing and Creating with AI	Jim Christianson	Zoom
5/29/25	Image Makers	David & Hali	Zoom
6/5/25	Men vs Women		Hybrid
6/12/25	Banquet/Business Meeting	Members	Hybrid

Color Key

Guest Speaker
Internal Programs
Internal Speakers
Competitions
Image Study

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT:	Amy Letourneau
VICE PRESIDENT:	Ed Szymanski
SECRETARY:	Billi Manning
TREASURER:	Ed Gooltz
PAST PRESIDENTS:	Cynde Cusack, Tom Amsterburg, Jim Borrebach,

COMMITTEES:

COMPETITION COMMITTEE:	Tony Mistretta (Chair) Patricia Cabral Bob Doyle Dan Gyves Alan Litchfield Prasanth Mudundi David Marshak Ed Gooltz
IMAGE STUDY:	Ray Guillette
NECCC REP:	Ray Guillette
NEW MEMBERS:	Cynde Cusack
NECCC DIGITAL REP:	Patricia Cabral, (Chair) Amy Letourneau
NECCC PRINTS REP:	Tony Mistretta
NOMINATIONS	Alan Litchfield (Chair), Silvana Della Camera, David McLaughlin
PSA REP	Ed Szymanski
PROGRAM COMMITTEE:	Amy Letourneau Chair), Ed Gootz, Faith Martin, Silvana Della Camera, Hali Sowle, Allen Litchfield, Cynde Cusack, David Marshak, Ed Szymanski, Tom Davis
REFLECTIONS:	Donna Parker (Co-Editor), Tom Amsterburg (Co-Editor)
SCHOLARSHIP FUND:	Jim Borrebach (Chair)
Multi-CLUB COMPETITION:	Mark Landman
FOUR SCORE RAFFLE	Jim Borrebach
VOLUNTEERS	Janet Casey (chair), Cynde Cusack, Jim Borrebach, Elizabeth, Siftar, Nancy Paradee, Patricia Cabral, Sue Shirley, Stephanie Sioras, Donna Parker, Joe Kennedy
WEBSITE:	Charlene Gaboriault (Webmaster)
WORKSHOPS	Ellen Kawadler, Donald Steele
TECHNOLOGY	David Marshak (chair), Jake Jacobson, Amos Lu, Ed Szymanski, Jim West



Donna Parker and Tom Amsterburg,
Co-Editors
P.O. Box 20
Wrentham, MA 02903-0020
<https://www.stonybrookcc.com>

MEETINGS:

Currently the Stony Brook Camera Club meets virtually via zoom every Thursday of each month; no meetings in July and August. Consult SBCC Calendar of Events. All meetings start at 7:30PM.

DUES:

Regular member	\$75
Student member	\$50
Senior member	\$50
Family: 2 or more regular members	\$125
Family: 2 - one senior member, one regular member	\$100
Family: 2 senior members	\$75

NEWSLETTER:

Published quarterly solely for the information, guidance and enjoyment of the Stony Brook Camera Club, Franklin, MA. All issues are available [HERE](#)

WEBSITE:

Visit our Website at www.stonybrookcc.com for the latest schedule, updates and breaking news, and photographs from our competitions, members and activities throughout the year.

FACEBOOK:

Our Facebook page is for current Stony Brook Camera Club members. You must register with Facebook before requesting to join our group. Any questions, email David Marshak from the SBCC website email tab (you must be logged in to view).

OFFICERS:

Elected annually and serve as the executive committee with two past presidents. SBCC is affiliated with the New England Camera Club Council (NECCC) and is a member of the Photographic Society of America (PSA).

MISSION STATEMENT:

Stony Brook Camera Club: To promote enjoyment and proficiency in all aspects of photography through education, fellowship, exchange of knowledge and experience; and a broad appreciation of nature and our environment.