Focal Point

Baltimore Camera Club

The Oldest Continually-Operating Photographic Society in the USA (Incorporated in 1884)

Together - Jennifer Smutek

April - June 2024 (issue 40, No 2)

Baltimore Camera Club

Board of Directors:
President: Diane Bovenkamp
1st VP, Programs: Sandy Nichols
2nd VP, Competitions: Tom Gisriel
Secretary: Mel Holden
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Web Chair: Kent Sutorius
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Competition Committee: Tom Gisriel, Guy Alston, Kent Sutorius, Jim Voeglein, Tina Whitehead
Field Outing Committee: Lewis Katz, Kenny Epps
Member and Visitor Welcome: Tina Whitehead
Mentors: Kenny Epps, Walter Levy
Photographic Society of America Club Representative for BCC: Diane Bovenkamp
Focal Point co-Editors: Lynn Roberts & Kent Sutorius

Program meetings are held weekly on Thursday nights via Zoom or in-person. All visitors are welcome (meeting starts at ~7:30—8 p.m.). See calendar (www.baltimorecameraclub.org/meetings.html) for details.

For more information, email the club President, Diane Bovenkamp (d_bovenkamp@yahoo.com) & visit our website www.baltimorecameraclub.org.

BCC is a Charter Member Club of the Photographic Society of America www.psa-photo.org and a Member of the Maryland Photography Alliance www.mdphotoalliance.org.

There is a Baltimore Camera Club YouTube page for accessing recorded videos of some Zoom presentations: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRe9N0w6Rog1iv51I0x0M9A

Please send feedback, ideas or article proposals for future Focal Point issues to luckylanefarm@gmail.com and kasutorius@gmail.com

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Remember: you can click on most images in Focal Point to see a full-size version

This Issue's Contents

Thanks to Diane Bovenkamp, Sandy Nichols, Lynn Roberts, Steve Sattler, Kent Sutorius, Phyllis Berger, Shailesh Waikar, Toom Gisriel, Rich Eskin and Sukumar Balachandran for their contributions to this issue.
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Kenny Epps - Nighting Gale

President's Corner

Hello!

Summer has now begun. Time to relax, have plenty of picnics and barbecues, as well as frolic in the pool, on the beach, and in nature. Note that our club meetings are now every other week, until our Welcome Back meeting in September. Be sure to check the calendar to see what's planned.

Now that our Board elections have finished, I'd like to thank Diane Brunetti for her service for many years as Secretary, and as Member-at-Large last year. Thank you for your many ideas and meticulous notes taken.

Also, thanks to Sandy Nichols. She has stepped down from five years in the position of Vice President of Programs, and will be a Member-at-Large next year as she mentors the incoming VP Programs, Christophe Casamassima. Thank you so much, Christophe, for stepping up and for your willingness to bring fresh new ideas to the Program nights for our club. Christophe will start his role when the Board turns over on August 1. Please note that is also the time to renew your dues, so be on the lookout for a reminder email to come from the automated system. Any questions, please talk with Jim Eichelman, Treasurer.

I would like to give an extended thanks to Sandy. I am in extreme respect and awe of what she does so effortlessly. Christophe is in good hands to learn the ropes since she's an amazing mentor.

One brilliant move Sandy did to keep our club going strong, was that she was part of the Board when Jim Voeglein was president, which cleverly and seamlessly switched our club to virtual meetings during Covid lockdown. This is important not just that BCC weekly meetings were a lifeline for members at the time, and for some of us our only social outlet, but that this enabled us to remain the oldest continually-operating camera club in the US.

She also developed her unmistakable style of giving a hand-written, personally crafted, heartfelt introduction (based on a one-on-one pre-presentation interview) that is read before every program. Many a presenter has said it was the best intro they've ever had.

Now, I'm hoping that she has time more time for us to pull her into quiet conversations about her style of street photography. I know I'd love to be mentored by her on how to up my game on street photography.

Please, everyone give her a warm 'thank you' for all she's done for the club.

Meanwhile, I would like to suggest that this is the *Summer of You*.

The Summer of Getting Back to What You Love.

Time to Prioritize yourself, reconnect with your Community, and Friends and Family.

Time to Live Fully, Smile often, and Inspire Change.

Here's a suggested, optional Creativity Checklist for the *Summer of You*:

- Take a self-portrait not reflected off of a mirror or surface of water

- Take a photo of a genre that you don't do often and would like to improve. i.e., if you're into landscape, do portraits or street photography or macro work.

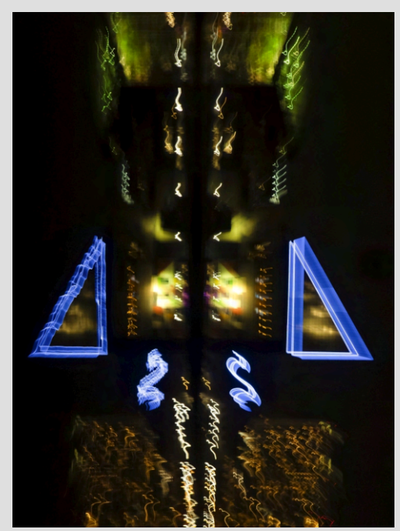
- Move from digital to paper. Select a favorite photo, print it, frame it and hang up on your wall.

Have a fun summer! See you at the next meeting.

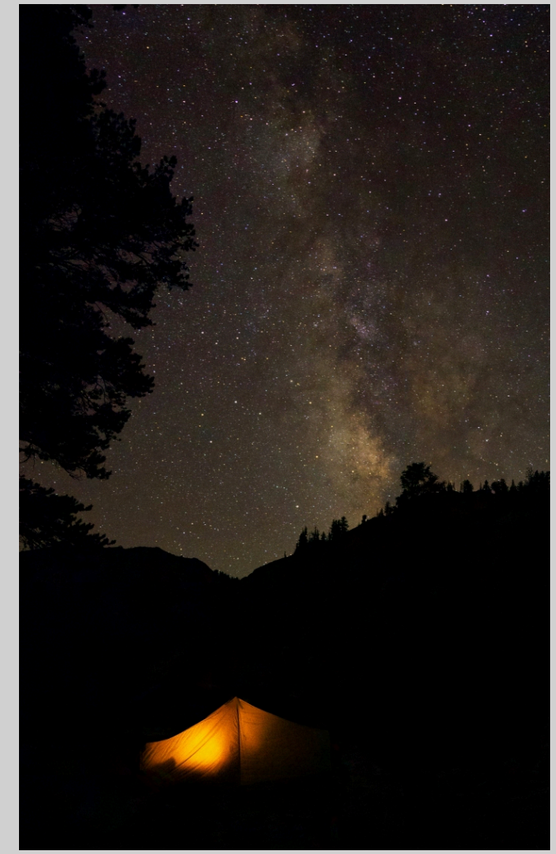
Best,

Diane

In Nashville this June.



Tina Whitehead - Abstract: Inner Harbor Launched



Brian Berbary - Rosalie Lake Milky Way

Christopher Frisone - Lost Lake, Oregon

Editor's Corner

It's *Your* Camera Club - How Can We Improve?

In addition to holding elections (see "President's Corner"), June 13 was our annual "Feedback Night". Topics included: programs; field shoots; meeting format (in-person vs Zoom); and competitions (how to get more people entering print competitions, especially in "Unlimited", where we are finding trouble securing the minimum number of entries; competition judging; themed competitions).

Eighteen members attended, and the conversation was lively, with many intriguing suggestions floated. What was clear was that Covid has robbed our club of some of the spirit of community that used to pervade it. As a community, we all should strive to work to rebuild this. We've been through too much to let Covid defeat us now! (See Steve Sattler's "MPA Corner" in this issue to remind yourself of some of the benefits of community in photography).

Current Club Participation Issues

One of us (Kent Sutorius) recently compiled an impressive amount of data pertaining to participation in various Club activities. Here we summarize the important aspects mainly related to participation in BCC competitions (which comprise half of our meetings during the September - May period).

A drop in both digital and print competition participation has been evident at both the Associate and Unlimited levels when we compare the average number of participants pre-, during, and post-Covid. For example, the average number of participants in digital competitions was 22 pre-Covid, remained at 22 during Covid, but dropped to 15 (a 32% decrease) post-Covid. At the Unlimited level, this decrease was similar: 21 participants pre-Covid, 17 during Covid, and only 14 post-Covid (a 33% decrease).

A decrease in participation is even more evident in looking at participation in print competitions. As we don't retain data on the total number of participants or numbers of prints submitted, we can only compare the number of placements awarded. (Recall that according to BCC rules, a minimum of 9 entries must be submitted to hold a competition in any particular category. If there are 9-11 prints entered, there are four placements (1st-3rd + HM). If there are 12 or more submissions, there are 6 placements (1st-5th + HM); click **here** for details).

Before Covid, we had sufficient submissions for full placements for all print competitions at both the Associate and the Unlimited categories. At all of our print competitions since Covid, we have maintained sufficient entries at the Associate level (both color and monochrome) for full placements. A dropoff in participation at the Unlimited level has, however, been particularly acute. There have been 19 print competitions since we resumed holding them. Eleven (58%) received sufficient submissions for full placements for Unlimited *monochrome* prints; 5 had limited placements; and 3 had insufficient prints entered to hold a competition. For Unlimited *color* competitions, only 3 of the 19 (16%) had enough entries for full placements, 8 for limited placements, and 8 received insufficient Unlimited monochrome prints for any competition.

The situation was even more dire this past year, when only 2 of the 8 (25%) Unlimited *monochrome* competitions had sufficient entries for full placements, 4 of the 8 had limited placements, and 2 of the 8 had insufficient entries. For Unlimited *color* prints, **no** competition had enough entries for full placements, half (4) had enough for limited placements, and the remaining four competitions received insufficient Unlimited color prints.

One contributing factor, to be sure, is that no one advanced from the Associate to the Unlimited level for prints during Covid, as all print competitions were canceled. We certainly do have (in some cases many) more individuals at present in the Associate level (37 in Associate Digital, 28 in Associate Monochrome Print, 33 in Associate Color Print) than at the Unlimited level (35, 21, and 18 individuals, respectively). But this observation doesn't quite explain the very low level of participation in Unlimited print competitions during the 2023-24 year, especially as several people have moved from the Associate to the Unlimited print levels during the past year.

Another troubling observation is that 70 (64%) of the Club's 109 active members ***never*** access the Club's website. This means that they are not checking our calendar; entering digital competitions; examining competition results or competition point totals; or downloading Focal Point. Yet these are key ways of staying in touch with the BCC community.

Suggestions for Improvement in Competition Participation?

How to increase participation, especially in print competitions, where we are hurting the most? Several ideas were floated at Feedback Night. One was to combine the Monochrome and Color print categories if we have insufficient entries for these to be judged separately. This would require careful bookkeeping of results; moreover, it becomes tricky to handle (say) individuals who only qualify for either Unlimited Monochrome or Unlimited Color print categories, but not both, but who suddenly find their image in a combined competition. Discussions have also been held about either lowering the threshold (reducing the number of points required to advance from Associate to Unlimited); this would help even out the numbers. (Of course the level of participation of members may vary between Associate and Unlimited members; do members become less active in competitions once they advance to Unlimited?) If we do move in this direction, how might we lower the threshold in an equitable manner? There is a vehicle for more advanced photographers to "fast track" their advancement through submitting a portfolio, but few members seem willing to take this approach.

Other Topics of Discussion

Quality of Judging:
- Please email the Competition Chair, Tom Gisriel, if you have specific reservations concerning the quality of any judges. Our Competition Chair keeps track of such observations.
- Should we allow judges to pre-screen digital images? (See "Proposed Competition Changes" in this issue). The hope is that streamlining the actual judging would enable more time for constructive criticism.

Themed Competitions (and Possible Alternatives):
- These tend to have fewer submissions, although they do serve to push people out of their "comfort zone". Should we offer more points for placements in themed competitions?
- Or, rather than themed "competitions", should members instead hold an exhibition on a specific theme or challenge? Perhaps these could be collaborative rather than competitive.
- Charm City Camera Club has an interesting model, in which they host monthly themed in-person "meetups", followed (two weeks later) by participants sharing their images. Should we emulate this model?

Field Shoots/Meetups:
- These provide a great means to get people together and build community.
- Kenny has been great in organizing these - but we need others to step up as well!

In-Person Activities:
- "Macro night" has been extremely popular for bringing people in for in-person activities.
- Kenny's lighting classes have also been outstanding. What else could we do?

Outreach:
- This effort builds community and also grows membership. Should we interact more with other area camera clubs? Establish a presence at Baltimore festivals such as Artscape?
- The Club will be printing business cards (with QR codes) that members will be able to hand out when attending the wealth of festivals Baltimore offers.
- Should we reach out to high schools offering classes in photography, even hold a "high school photo competition" or exhibition at the end of each semester? Perhaps this could help grow our number of younger members.

Social Media:
- We discussed opening the Facebook group to nonmembers, while retaining its status as a "private" group. We will move in this direction.
- Should we also establish an Instagram presence? (Volunteers?)

Changes to Meeting Formats:
It's been proposed to hold:
- Print competitions - in-person only (already approved by the BCC Board)
- Digital competitions - hybrid
- In-person presentations and activity nights - in-person only
- Remote presentations - virtual only

Bottom lines:
- Please give us feedback - even if you missed "Feedback Night", it's not too late!
- "This club only survives on volunteers". Please volunteer!

Member Spotlight
Shailesh Waikar

How long you have been involved with photography?

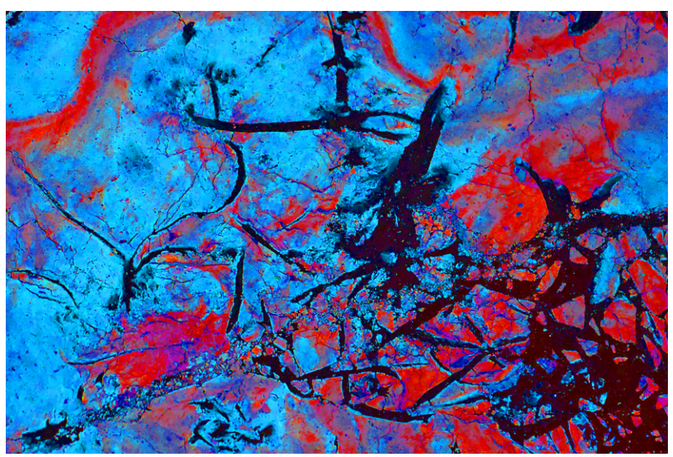
I have owned and enjoyed a DSLR for almost 20 years, just taking occasional pictures. But, like many others, I was looking for a hobby during COVID lockdown. I took an online photography course in 2020. The course was very helpful in getting over the initial learning curve, and was a great introduction to various aspects of photography.

Types of photography that interest you

Nature, Wildlife and Macro

Type of camera you use

Canon 6D Mark-1. I have a few lenses but mostly use Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 L IS II USM for wildlife and Tokina 100mm f2.8 for macro photography.



Oil and Water

What you hope to get out of being a member of BCC.

BCC members and community are a great source of knowledge and inspiration. I am hoping to improve my skills and learn a few new techniques. Also, to make some new friends.

Love Birds, Bhigwan, India

Morning Dew

Take Off

How I Got the Shot

By Sukumar Balachandran

On a cold, overcast January day in 2020 BC (Before Covid), I decided to go to the Rawlings Conservatory in Baltimore.

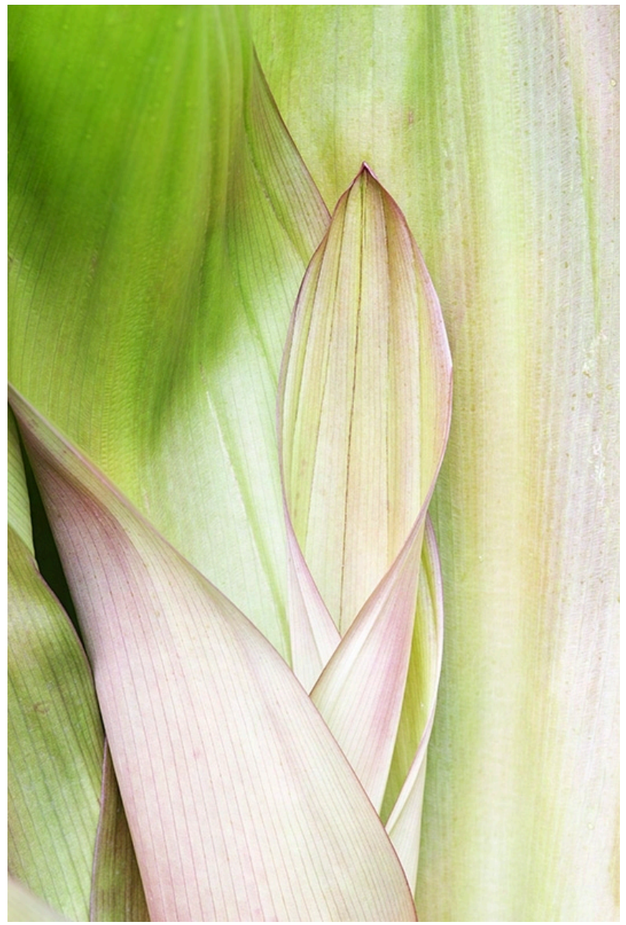
Since I did not have a macro lens for my Sony mirrorless camera, I took my old faithful Nikon D800 with a Sigma 105mm macro and my tripod.

I have been to the Rawlings Conservatory many times, and have come up with many B&W images. I decided to look for color as my assignment that day.

This plant (I have no clue what it is, except it looked as if it belonged to the banana family) caught my eye. I set up my tripod and started to aim for the young shoots that revealed the opposing colors on a color wheel. I took a few shots of the interesting juxtaposition of the pinks and the greens, and selected one for the final edit.

The image went through a bit of cropping, white balance correction, cloning to remove blemishes, color adjustments, curves adjustments, and a little glamor glow followed by localized sharpening. It was printed on Epson Ultra Premium photo paper “luster” using an Epson 3880 printer.

Camera: Nikon D800
Lens: Sigma 105mm macro
Exposure: 1.3 sec at f/8
Focus distance: 1 m
Tripod: Gitzo GT 2540
Ballhead: Really Right Stuff BH-40



Macro Night Images

Shailesh Waikar

Shailesh Waikar

MPA Corner
by Steven Sattler

Beyond the Shot: The Importance of Community

Photography, as an art form and a means of communication, holds a unique power to capture moments, convey emotions, and tell stories. Beyond the technical skills and artistic vision required to produce compelling images, the role of community in the world of photography cannot be overstated. A sense of community within photography provides numerous benefits that enhance the impact of this art form we love so much. Here are just a few of the benefits:

- Increased Learning and Growth Opportunities
- Emotional Support and Motivation
- Enhanced Creativity and Innovation
- Building a Stronger Photographic Culture
- Invaluable Networking Opportunities
- Access to Resources
- Celebrating Achievements Together

MPA has recently had numerous discussions on enhancing the sense of community. COVID grew MPA's community through our free virtual events such as Artist Spotlight - The Webinar, Artist Spotlight – The Podcast, and Maryland Masters. MPA hopes to continue growing its community through enhanced focus on social media communications. The real impact of COVID was at the club level. Not only was there a decrease in membership in many clubs, but its impact remains with reduced in-person participation at meetings and events. That sense of community took a hit.

Creating a sense of community in photography is essential for the growth and development of individual clubs and photographers, and the enrichment of photographic culture. Communities offer support, encouragement, and opportunities for learning and collaboration. They help preserve and promote the art of photography. In a rapidly changing world, both physical and digital photography communities play a crucial role in in the future of clubs and MPA.

A Childs Gaze - Steven Sattler

Competition Changes Coming This Fall

By Tom Gisriel, Lynn Roberts, and Kent Sutorius

The BCC Board has implemented, or is considering, changes in competitions as of the 2024-2025 year:

1. The Board has voted that **all print competitions will be in-person only** at the church. Why? First, in-person meetings foster interactions that help develop a sense of community. Second, we wish to encourage more BCC members to attend in person, and to submit more prints for competitions. (See "Editor's Corner" for details). Third, despite our best efforts, we are unable to ensure that the experience of viewing the prints via Zoom is on par with attending them in person. Unlike the digital competitions, where the images can viewed at high quality at home (and it's clear which image is being discussed by the judge), the print images must be shot with a Zoom camera. Not only does this impair the quality of the viewing experience, it's also not possible to record an image while the judge is commenting on it without blocking the judge's or the audience's view. We've been shooting each image after the print has been moved to a separate easel (and the judge has finished their commentary). As a result, remote audiences can't relate the ongoing comments to the image in their view.

2. The Board has approved **changes to the dimensions of digital images** in competitions.

- Horizontal (landscape orientation) images: size your images to 1920W (max) X 1080H
- Vertical (portrait orientation) images: maximum height should be 1080
- Square images: 1080 X 1080

Lightroom can resize your images as follows.

Within Lightroom:
Click – Export and put in your settings:
File format: JPEG
Color Space: sRGB
Quality 100%
Image size: resize to fit – width & height
1920 X 1080

You might be concerned lest this 1920 x 1080 ratio (equivalent to a 16:9 aspect ratio) compress or "stretch" some of your images if you had cropped them to a different aspect ratio, but Lightroom is clever enough to have figured out how to use this one "image size" option to work without distorting or cropping your images. You can find an excellent video on how to set up a preset in Lightroom to accomplish this for all of your images by clicking on the link.

3. The Board will be weighing a suggestion made during Feedback Night that one digital competition in fall 2024 be **judged by BCC members**.

The format suggested is that the Associate competition could be judged by a panel of 3 members who compete in the Unlimited division, and the Unlimited division will be judged by 3 members of the Associate division.

The competition schedule for 2024-2025 has not yet been established, so the date of this competition (if approved) will be determined later. Once the date is determined, the Competition Chair will seek volunteers to act as judges.

If this goes well in the fall, the Competition Chair will extend this to a spring competition.

4. Several judges have asked to have **access to the images to be judged** before the night of the competition. The Board is also weighing this suggestion; if implemented, we will consider moving the deadline for submission to an earlier date.

5. If you have **thoughts related to competitions** (either these changes or themes for competitions), please forward them to the Competition Chair, Tom Gisriel, for consideration.

6. As always, the **BCC Board encourages your input**! Board meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 6 PM (and are typically hybrid, with a Zoom option), and all are welcome to attend, especially if you wish to weigh in on any of these proposed changes to competitions.

Lightroom and Photoshop Post Processing Tips

by Lynn Roberts

What's New in Lightroom Classic

Several changes were announced to Lightroom Classic in May, 2024. (Note that any changes to Lightroom Classic also apply to Adobe Camera Raw; the features are identical). You can find a summary of these changes in a blog by Julieanne Kost here.

Note that with this release, Lightroom Classic will need to **upgrade your catalog**. This creates a new copy of your catalog; the original copy will remain intact.

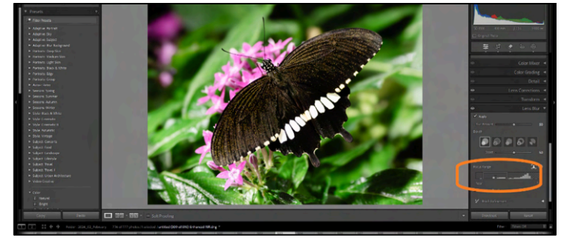
Lens Blur. One of the biggest changes is to enable a Lens Blur feature, something that once was only available in Photoshop. This feature allows you to quickly select a focus area and create the appearance of a shallow depth of field. You can access this tool by clicking on the "Lens Blur" panel in the "Develop" module (it's located between the "Transform" and the "Effects" panels; see orange oval below).

Once you've opened the "Lens Blur" panel, to activate this feature, click on the "Apply" box (see orange oval in the following image). Lightroom will make an attempt to detect the subject, and will apply a blur to the rest of the image.

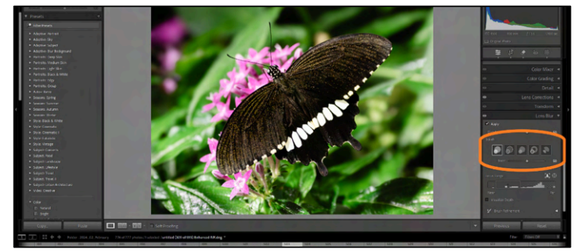
You can adjust how much blur you introduce using the "Blur Amount" slider (shown below).

If you want to manually override the area that's been blurred, you can select the "point/area" focus icon (it looks a bit like a wheel). Once this icon has been selected, clicking and dragging within the image will place a different area in focus.

You can also adjust the focus area and depth of field using the Focus Range bar (next screenshot). Dragging the rectangle within this bar adjusts the focus area (from near to far), while making this rectangle smaller or larger alters the depth of field.



The lens blur tool can also add a bokeh to the image to make the blur look more natural, selecting from five different options (see square icons indicated in next screenshot).



The "Visualize Depth" box (final screenshot) allows you to visualize what portions of an image have been blurred. Enabling this box by checking on it shows areas in focus in shades of yellow, and out-of-focus areas in shades of purple. These colors are mapped onto the "Focus Range" bar.

With "Visualize Depth" enabled, as you reposition or resize the rectangle within the "Focus Range" bar, areas of the image in focus will now show with a white overlay.

To watch a brief (5:50) video that provides more detail on this new "Lens Blur" feature, click here.

Finally, the new version of Lightroom Classic also provides improved removal of distractions via its "**Generative Remove (Early Access)**" tool, still in development. (Note that this tool requires Internet access). This tool will be the subject of a future column in Focal Point.

How to Replace Skies in Photoshop

by Phyllis Berger

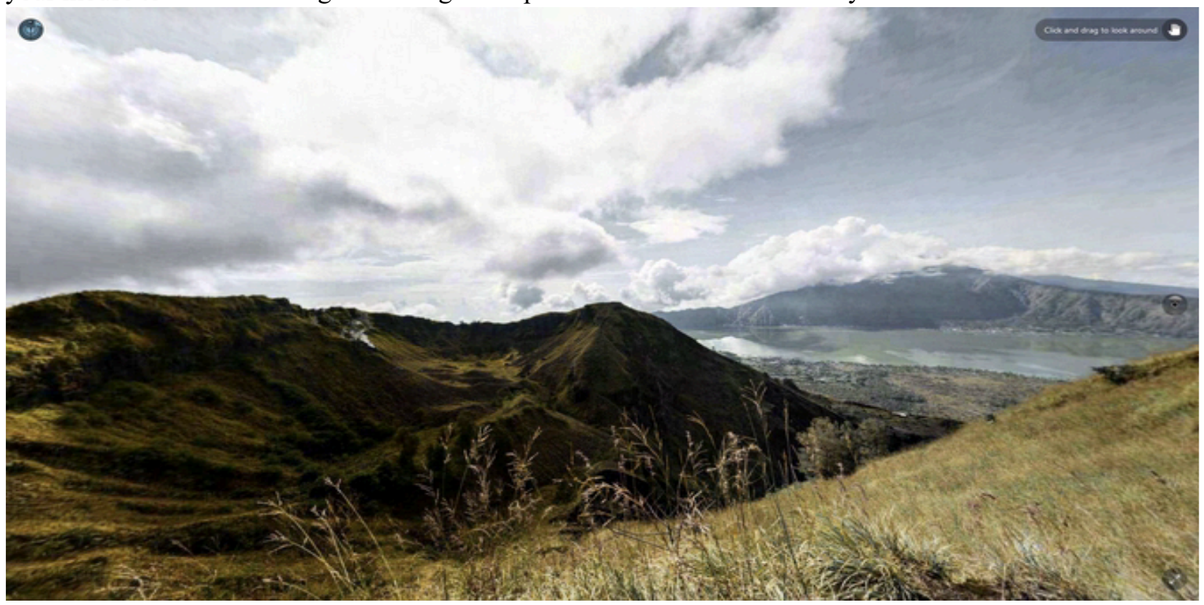
Phyllis Berger has contributed a video outlining the steps required to very easily replace skies using Photoshop. In this video, she explains both how to replace a boring sky by using a sky within Photoshop's library of skies, and also how to replace it using a photograph of a sky that you took yourself.

Her video, which runs at 4 minutes and 24 seconds, can be accessed here: here.

Do keep in mind that if you wish to enter images into competition, according to BCC rules, *all* of the elements of each image must be the product of your own photography. In other words, using a sky from Photoshop's library (or any other source not of your own work) is not allowed.

Photography & Technology by Kent Sutorius
Photography at All the Angles

One of the trends a number of photography websites state for 2024 is **photography at the angles**. In the February 2023 issue of *Focal Point*, we introduced the popularity of Drone Photography, which provides the above-ground angle. This year one trend in angles is 360° and panoramic viewing. Such 360° and panoramic viewing can be performed on DSLR/Mirrorless cameras, smartphones and specialized cameras which are compact, and many of which are waterproof. Imagine the 2D image below could show more possibilities. **Click on the image below** provided from Panoraven.com and when the image opens then use your mouse to move the image left to right or up and down. It will also slowly move on its own.



Advantages of 360° photography and why do it?
There are many advantages of true 360° photography and viewing for the photographer and videographer.
- **Simplicity** - The set up and post production of 360° photography for smartphones or a specialized 360° camera is fast and easy. 360° photography can also be performed by DSLR/Mirrorless cameras but may be more expensive if you don't have the right equipment. Post production can also take longer to perform depending on the software you use.
- **Viewing possibilities** – Whether taking photographs or video, 360° photography provides a variety of looks or angles of your subject from where you are standing. You end up with a totally spherical view of your subject. This means you do not have to frame your subject in advance. You can frame your subject in post production to get the look you want.
- **Shooting possibilities** – With a smartphone or 360° camera you can use a selfie stick to place your phone or camera in positions difficult to get to. Imagine you are on a bridge but want a view of the scene taken under the bridge. 360° photography and a stick can do that. 360° cameras allow you to use an **invisible selfie stick**. The stick is automatically edited out so you only see what you are shooting (however you can include yourself if you want without the stick viewable). Many 360° cameras are waterproof so you can take underwater photography.
- **Professional Presentation** - If you are a professional/commercial photographer, then 360° photography can enhance how you promote your work whether you are a wedding, real estate, tourism, or blogger/vlogger photographer.

360° photography using DSLR/Mirrorless Camera
Using a DSLR/Mirrorless camera will probably give you the best resolution and quality compared to a smartphone or 360° camera. You can also shoot in RAW, whereas a number of 360° cameras don't shoot in RAW. Equipment needed for 360° photography: Camera, Fisheye lens, tripod, single-row or multi-row panoramic head, and stitching software (which follows later in the article). A multi-row panoramic head is preferred because you can take the horizontal, zenith, and nadir shots easily. You only need to take 8-9 shots and stitching in post production will allow for fewer corrections.

360° photography using a Smartphone
If you have an iPhone there is a built in panorama app where you can perform a 360° horizontal (monoscopic) panorama. It will not perform a true 360° shoot that includes the zenith and nadir. If you already have the *Google Street View* app installed on your phone, you are all set up to shoot true 360°. Just open the app, click camera on the app and the app will show you where to point and shoot. The app will automatically stitch your composition. **Unfortunately**, if you don't have the app already installed on your phone, *Google Street View* is no longer available and you will have to use apps such as *DMD Panorama*, *Panorama 360*, *Teleport* (free), and others. Android phones can download *Google Camera* app and use that. Newer Samsung cameras have a built-in 360° option. Open the camera, select **Mode** and select **Surround** shot. All these programs either automatically stitch your shots or have a platform to do so.

360° photography using a 360° Camera
Many people prefer to purchase a 360° Camera for many reasons. They are compact (usually around 1.5" by 6"), are waterproof, and have their own post production software. Some can shoot in RAW and some can shoot up to 8K.

Some of the most often mentioned are:
- Insta 360 X3 (½ inch Sony sensor, stills resolution 72MP, Video 5.7K, video not that great) $400
- Insta360 X4 (½ inch Sony sensor, stills resolution 72MP, Video 4K to 8K) $500
- Insta360 ONE RS (1 inch Leica sensor, works well in low light, still resolutions 21MP, 6k video), $800
- Ricoh Theta Z – (1 inch sensor, stills resolution 23MP, 4K video) $1050

Insta360 X4

Ricoh also makes other 360° cameras ranging from $365-$800.

Post-Processing
For conventional processing with a Desktop photo editor, Photoshop and Luminar will work with the stitching plus photo editing. Many websites report that Affinity Photo worked the easiest and best. When it comes to 360° cameras, most have their own software to process. For external video, the free program *CapCut* does a great job of editing video 360. There are also external programs (for a monthly fee) that will stitch your images and host them on the cloud, allowing you to embed them in the web, Instagram, email, etc. One company is *Panoraven*.

Uploading & Sharing
You can upload to *Facebook*, *Google photos*, and *Instagram 360*. Set up a free account at Kuula.co and share on social media or embed in your website. The *Theta360* desktop version is designed for Ricoh cameras but will upload other cameras and provide embed or links for social media and websites. The downside is that the Theta watermark will show on the top left or bottom of the 360 image. *Momento360* also provide a free account to upload 360 photos and embed or link to other media but also includes their watermark.

If you want try out these cameras, you can rent them from Lensrentals.com or LensProToGo.com

Spring Program Nights
by Sandy Nichols

BCC PROGRAMS
April-June 2024

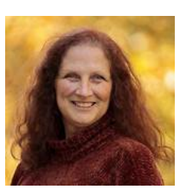
Our April-June 2024 program schedule was quite full and diverse, with three presentations, one Member Critique Night, an Activity Night, and our annual Feedback Night.

On May 9th, **Cole Thompson** presented "**Vision, Passion, Projects**," in which he talked about his conversion from a Photographic Grazer, photographing wherever it was greener for good single images, to becoming what he calls "project crazy." All of his portfolios, he said, "have two ingredients in common: Vision and Passion."

By sharing a number of the critically aclaimed photo projects he's created over the years, he demonstrated how to identify good project ideas, how to create a a worthy project, and what rules to follow, or not, in developing portfolios.

Then on May 23rd, **Jon Meyer,** a long-time BCC club member now residing in North Carolina, shared his experiences producing several award-winning series in **"Portfolios: What, Why and How**."

Jon talked about what portfolios are, the supporting materials important to building one, and how to think about what you want to say with your series. Using images from several of his recent series, he illustrated the power of visual storytelling and the joy of saying, in his words, "something coherent about your photographic vision.



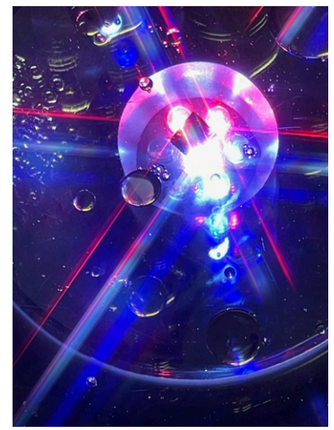
On May 30th, freelance nature photographer **Jamie Konarski Davidson** gave an inspiring and informative presentation on "**Wabi Sabi - Finding Beauty in Imperfection**," in which she helped us understand how to expand our appreciation of beauty to include imperfection, incompleteness and impermanence in photography.

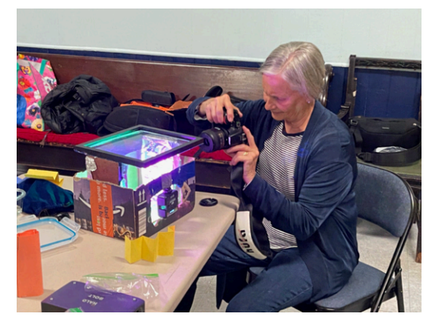
With images from her own body of work inspired by the Japanese concept of Wabi-Sabi, Jamie shared basic concepts of Wabi-sabi and how this philosophy can be incorporated into

your photography and, with intention, into your life. You can access a recording of Jamie's presentation **here**.

Because the number of images submitted for our **Member Critique Night** on April 11th was lower than normal, there was more time to ask questions and give feedback. And thanks to the sage advice of members in attendance, the discussion was packed full of ideas for improving our photography. We also learned to make streets look wavy, in Guy Alston's "Light Waves."

On April 25th, the club hosted a **Macro Activity Night**, where members brought what they needed for an evening of macro photography. It's always a fun event with lots of camaderie, experimenting, learning, and some amazing images. All pictures by Diane Bovenkamp.





Last but not least, our annual **Feedback Night**, held on June 13, was considered very much a success. After electing our officers for the next fiscal year, there was a lively discussion with club members offering constructive ideas on how to improve the club, including types of programs and activities offered, how digital print and competitions are run, the quality of judging of these competitions, and ways to increase in-person attendance (see "Editor's Corner" for details). A sincere note of gratitude to all of you who participated and offered such helpful ideas.

Cheers!
Sandy

Notes from the Field

By Lynn Roberts

Field Shoot at the Farm by Lynn Roberts

In what is becoming an annual tradition, BCC members were invited to come out to the wilds of northern Baltimore County on Saturday, April 20 for a photo shoot at Lucky Lane Farm, a small sheep farm owned and operated by BCC member Lynn Roberts.

Lucky Lane Farm - image by Kenny Epps

Lambs are typically born in March (a busy month on the farm) - not a particularly photogenic time of year, as it's in the midst of mud season. By April, however, the sodden, muddy pastures have converted to fresh green grass, and the lambs and ewes are enjoying their chance to graze. Better yet: spring bulbs are in bloom, and with luck the weather is mild, with blue skies and puffy clouds. All of these came together this year: the weather couldn't have been nicer, and the lambs outdid themselves cavorting in the pastures.

Some 13 BCC members attended this year, several for the first time, and their images were the best ever.

One member, Christophe Casamassima, entered two prints taken during this photo shoot in the photography competition at this year's Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival. One print, of two lambs, won first place in the "Lambs - Monochrome" category, and the other, of an airborne ewe, won not only first place but also "Best of Maryland" in the Landscape category. See "Honors and Accolades" for details!

Image by Christophe Casamassima

Image by Beth Tribe

Image by Michael Washington

BCC Spring Trip

By Rich Eskin

BCC Spring Outing by Rich Eskin

Our recent (June 7-9, 2024) Club trip to the Laurel Highlands area of Pennsylvania was arranged by member Lewis Katz, a former travel agent. Lewis has been arranging spring and fall trips for the club for many years. The lodging is generally inexpensive, occasionally quirky, and the locations replete with photographic opportunities. The trips are informal and unstructured, spouses are welcome, some members share rooms, and members can tour the areas individually, with a friend or partner, or in ad hoc groups that get together to visit an area of common interest.

Trips start on Friday and run through Sunday and specific schedules are up to each individual. Usually Saturday dinner is arranged as to time and location so we can eat together and share our experiences up to that point.

This trip centered on the town of Ohiopyle, the adjacent State Park, the Youghiogheny [yawki-gay-nee] River Gorge, including several waterfalls, some local historical sights, and if you were so inclined, a winery and distillery. Ohiopyle is in the area of Pennsylvania known as the Laurel Highlands in south central Pennsylvania.

Some non-photographic items of note: several participants remarked that the local restaurants served huge portions at reasonable prices, parking was not generally a problem, and the closest gas station was 5 miles from the lodge. For the best photographic opportunities at key sites, you needed to get there before the crowds. In the town of Ohiopyle, there is a nice visitor center right on the bank of the Youghiogheny River that has exhibits on the local sporting activities, the history of the river and the geography of the area. There were public bathrooms in several locations, and high on our list: numerous opportunities for ice cream.

I encourage all club members to consider participating in future club trips. **All photos by Rich Eskin. More photos on page 27.**

Honors & Accolades

Christophe Casamassima's image "Walter, Washington, DC. 2024" took 2nd place in the April 2024 monochrome print competition put on by the Maryland Photography Alliance. This was an extremely tough competition, with 936 entries submitted. The judge, Carolyn Mendelsohn, provided insightful commentary on all of the images that placed. In all, 20 of the 936 images were recognized: 1st through 3rd; a new category ("Distinguished entry"), and 16 Honorable Mention awards.

Walter, Washigton, DC. 2024

Kudos are also owed to **Sukumar Balachandran**, whose image "Old Buds" received an Honorable Mention in this same competition. You can view all the images that placed, as well as the judger's commentary, here: **https://www.mdphotoalliance.org/2024-bw-photo-contest-winners**

Old Buds

Christophe's awards this spring also included two images entered in the photography competition at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival (May 4-5, 2024). These received first place in their respective divisions ("Lambs - Monochrome" and "Landscape - Monochrome"). The second of these (of an airborne ewe) also received a special "Best of Maryland" award reserved for the best image submitted by a Maryland photographer.

Lambs - Monochrome

Sheep Landscape - Monochrome

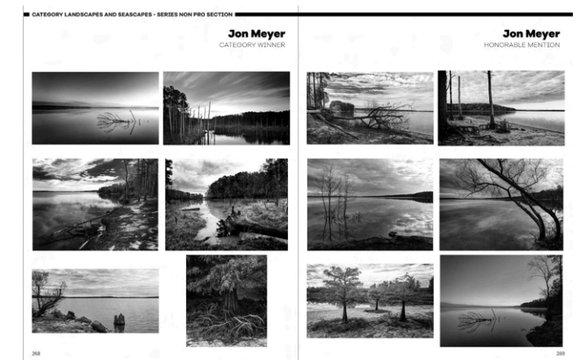
A third BCC member, **Jon Meyer**, received recognition this spring for his work. His images, "Spirits" and "Changeling", from the "Inner Darkness" portfolio were juried into the Maryland Federation of Art's online show called "Portals." In the show the two images are called "Portals" and "Portals II," respectively.

The link to the show is **https://mdfedart.com/exhibitions/** see "Portals." The show runs from June 14 to July 31.

Changeling

Also, **Jon's** portfolio "Jordan Lake" won the Amateur Landscapes and Seascapes Category of the 21st Pollux Awards. A second portfolio on the same subject received Honorable Mention in that category. Both were published in the Special Issue of FotoNostrum Magazine, May 11, 2024, Amateur Section, pp. 268-269.

The link is **https://www.magcloud.com/browse/issue/2829555**. The images are on Jon's website at **https://www.jonmeyerphotographicart.com/current-news/view/1732956/2/8361865/8361866**.



A fourth BCC member, **Michael Mininsohn**, was awarded first place in the adult category of the Howard County Conservancy photo contest in March 2024 for his image "Spun Glass Slug Moth Caterpillar". Michael notes: "Yes it is alive!"

Spun Glass Slug Moth Caterpillar

Honors & Accolades (Continued)

Deborah Davis received an honorable mention for her photograph "Go O's" in the The Baltimore National Heritage Area (BNHA) "2023 It's a SNAP!" photography contest. BNHA was looking for what makes Baltimore, "Charm City"—the PEOPLE. Deborah's photograph is on display in the Peale, Baltimore's Community Museum at 225 Holliday Street, Baltimore, along with other winning entries. Images are on display from April 25th - September 1, 2024. Deborah said, "I was so proud of myself seeing a photo of mine on exhibit at a museum."

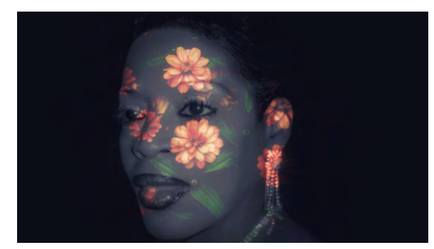
UMMC Healing Arts Exhibition

Guy Alston writes: "For the past six years, I have been on a personal artistic journey; The University of Maryland Medical Center has been a significant part of this journey, hosting its annual "Healing Arts" exhibition for over a decade. The University of Maryland Medical Center NAP Exhibit is held onsite in Baltimore, Maryland. Artists invited to participate in this exhibition include University of Maryland Medical Center employees, physicians, residents, retirees, and immediate family members of employees, physicians, residents, or retirees.

"I entered my first work in 2020 at a colleague's suggestion. It is a great opportunity to showcase your work since everything is displayed and then judged. Unlike our photo competitions, your photography is up against any other type of art in your classifications. So it's painting vs. sculpture vs. Works on paper vs. Photography vs. Mixed Media vs. etc…

"I have entered four of these exhibitions, placed in three, and won one outright. I also sold two pieces. Participating in the BCC competitions, especially the print competitions, prepared me well for this type of contest. You can find out more about the National Arts Program at the links below."

https://nationalartsprogram.org/
https://nationalartsprogram.org/ummc
My Artist page at NAP
https://nationalartsprogram.org/users/sirguy



BCC at the Frederick Camera Clique Juried Exhibition

BCC members made an impressive showing at the Frederick Camera Clique's recent juried photography exhibit. Six different BCC members have had images accepted (by juror Corey Frey) for this upcoming show: **Diane Bovenkamp**, **Christophe Casamassima**, **Chris Frisone**, **Vella Kendall**, **Charles Levie**, and **Sandy Nichols**.

Diane Bovenkamp ("Storm Rolling In")

Christophe Casamassima ("Channeling")

Chris Frisone ("City View")

Honors and Accolades (Continued)

Vella Kendall ("Marché aux Legumes")

Vella Kendall ("A Hard Life")

Vella Kendall ("Competition")

Charles Levie ("Foggy Descent")

Sandy Nichols ("Kids at Play")

In all, 359 entries were submitted by 80 different photographers, from which 66 images (representing the work of 37 different photographers) had their work accepted.

The exhibition will be on display at the Hodgson Gallery at Frederick Community College from July 13 through September 4, 2024. There will be a reception at 5 pm on July 13 at the Hodgson Gallery on the campus of Frederick Community College. At this time the winning images will be announced.
More information: https://www.frederickcameraclique.org/fcc-annual-exhibit-2024#dashboard

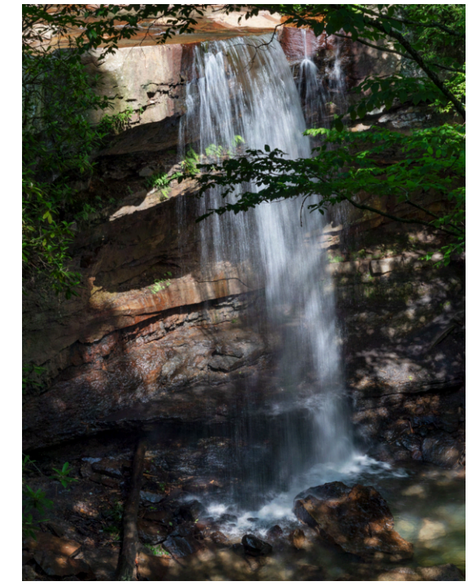
Tom Gisriel's image, "Super-Soaker Elvises", has been selected for inclusion in the 2024 Juried Show of Artists' Gallery, Ellicott City, located at 8197 Main Street, Ellicott City 21043.

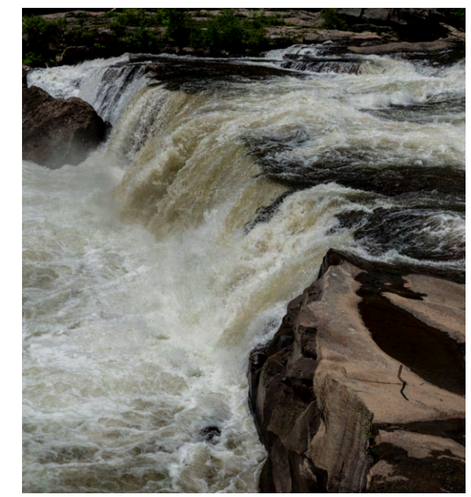
The juried show will be displayed at the Gallery from June 26-July 21.

A reception for the show will be Sunday, June 30, 2-5 PM. More information is available **here**.

Alan Wilder's, *Osprey* placed #48 in The 2024 Audubon Photo Awards: The Top 100.

Images from Spring Trip to Ohiopyle

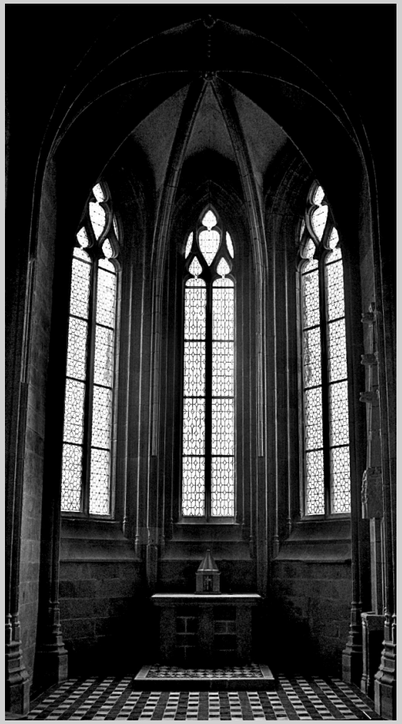




Monochrome Print Competition - April 4, 2024

1st Place - Associate - Jennifer Smutek - Frozen Galaxy

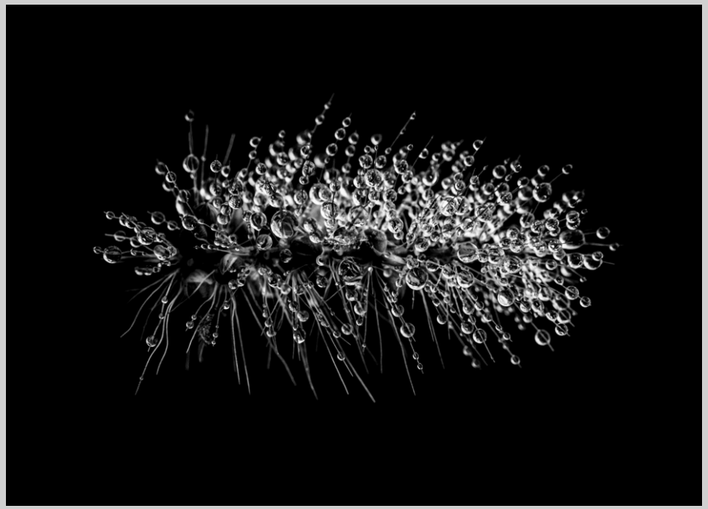
2nd Place - Associate - Tina Whitehead - Superior Model



3rd Place - Associate - Tom Gisriel - A Chapel in the Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey

4th Place - Associate - Tina Whitehead - ThePiano

5th Place - Associate - Tom Gisriel - Two at the Door



Honorable Mention - Associate - Jennifer Smutek - Nature's Fireworks

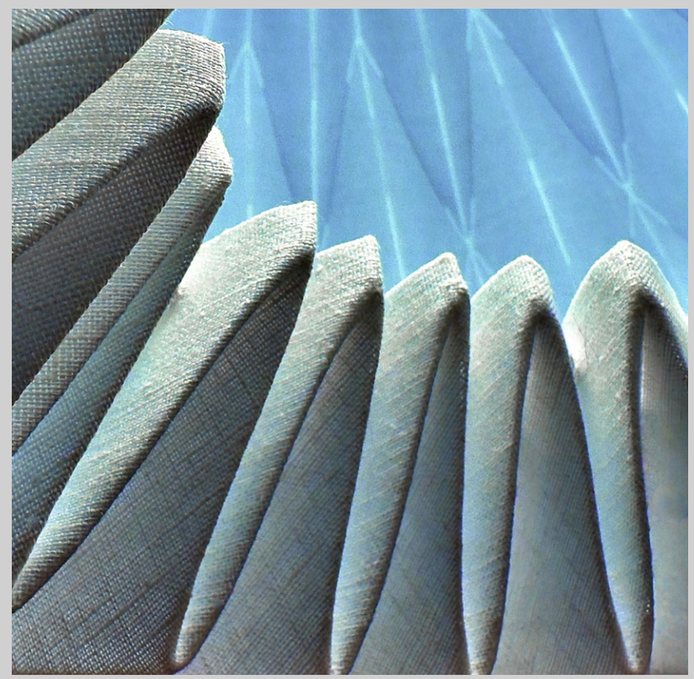
Color Print Competition - April 4, 2024

1st Place - Associate - Jennifer Smutek - Together

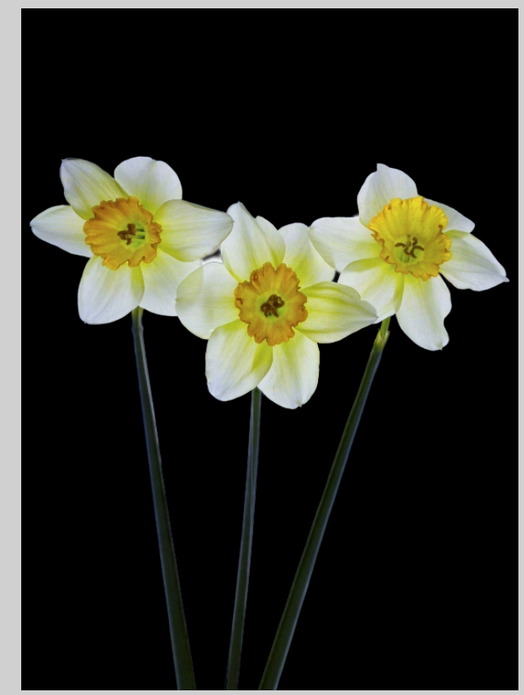
2nd Place - Associate - Jim Eichelman - Sea Foam Sunrise

3rd Place - Associate - Mike Navarre - Preservation Hall Memories

4th Place - Associate - Jennifer Smutek - Grounded

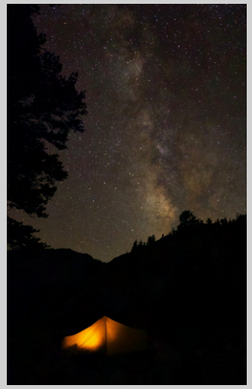


5th Place - Associate - Tom Gisriel - Crenallations



Honorable Mention - Associate - Kent Sutorius - Spring Trio

Projected Digital Print Competition - April 18, 2024

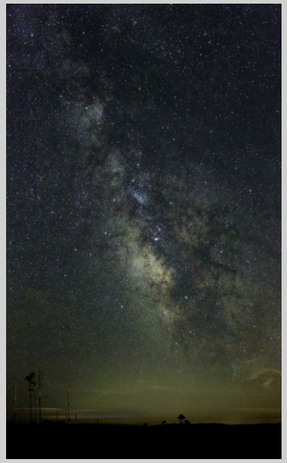


1st Place - Associate - Brian Berbary - Rosalie Lake Milky Way

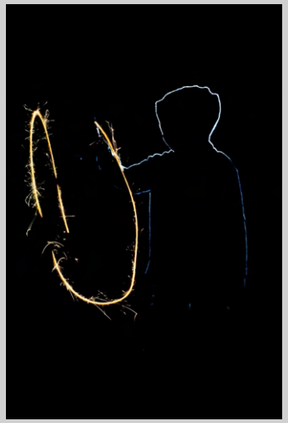
2nd Place - Associate - Deborah Davis - Privacy

1st Place - Unlimited - Mike Navarre - Early Hike For A Sunrise Shoot

2nd Place - Unlimited - Paul David - Moving to the Music



3rd Place - Associate - Kent Sutorius - Expansive Milky Way over Hoppers Island

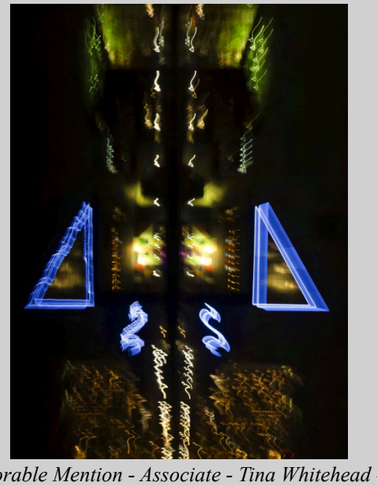


4th Place - Associate - Jennifer Smutek - Child's Play

3rd Place - Unlimited - Christopher Frisone - Lost Lake, Oregon

4th Place - Unlimited - Kenny Epps - Nighting Gale

5th Place - Associate - Jennifer Smutek - Pink Flamingos, Hon-101



Honorable Mention - Associate - Tina Whitehead - DSC00310 -Abstract: Inner Harbor Launched

5th Place - Unlimited - Steven Sattler - Sea Stacks at Vik

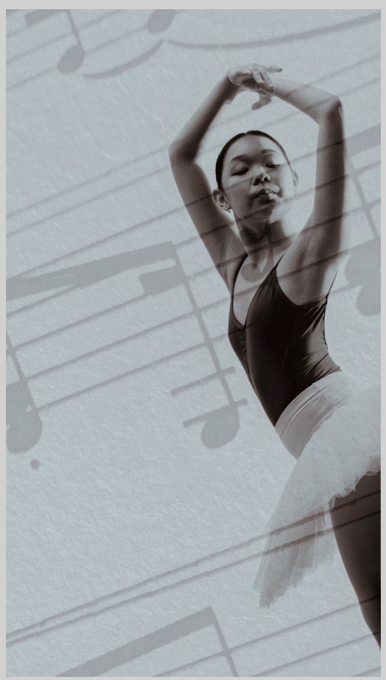
Honorable Mention - Unlimited - Steven Sattler - Brooklyn Park View

Monochrome Print Competition - May 2, 2024

1st Place - Associate - Guy Alston - Shopping

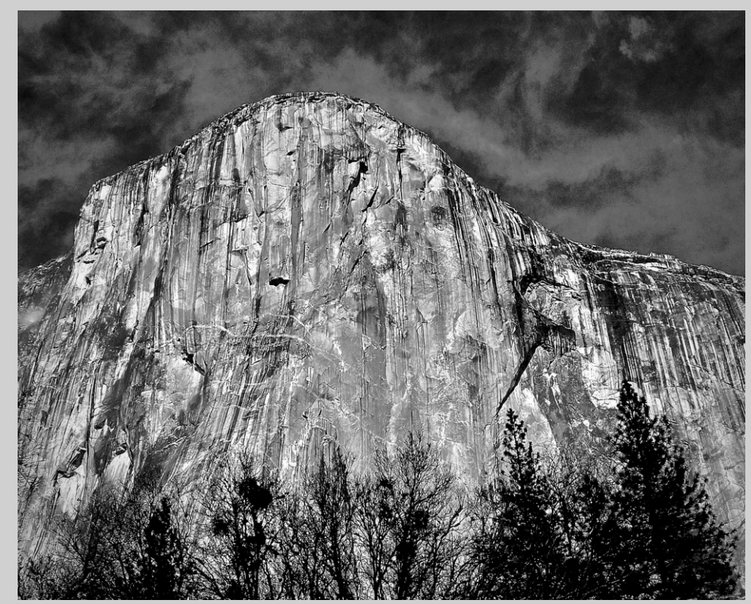
2nd Place - Associate - Diane Brunetti - Road Trip Circa 1951

3rd Place - Associate - Tina Whitehead - Little Boy Sheep



4th Place - Associate - Guy Alston - The Dance

5th Place - Associate - Tom Gisriel
Stairs Before a Wall of Gold Records



Honorable Mention - Associate - Tom Gisriel - The Face of El Capitan

Color Print Competition - May 2, 2024

2nd Place - Associate - Tina Whitehead - Avant Garde

3rd Place - Associate - Kent Sutorius Swaying Irises

1st Place - Associate - Eve Bond - Crop of Violets

4th Place - Associate - Tom Gisriel - Crag on Skellig Michael

5th Place - Associate - Tina Whitehead -
Attack Of Planet Pinktron

Honorable Mention - Associate - Tom Gisriel - Super-Soaker Elvises

Projected Digital Print Competition May 16, 2024

1st Place - Associate - Guy Alston - Three Strange Eyes

2nd Place - Associate - Phylllis Berger - My Spirit Guide

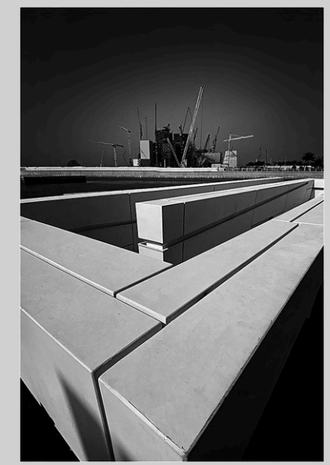
1st Place - Unlimited - Charles Levie - Guardian of the Plate

2nd Place - Unlimited - Michael Navarre - Born to Ride, Oahu

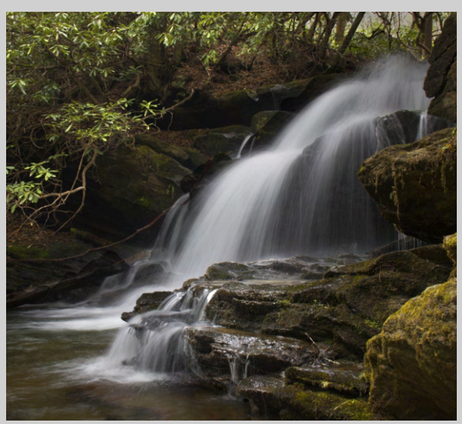
3rd Place - Associate - Christophe Casamassima

4th Place - Associate - Tina Whitehead - An Alstroemeria In High Key

3rd Place - Unlimited - Joan Saba - Be My Partner



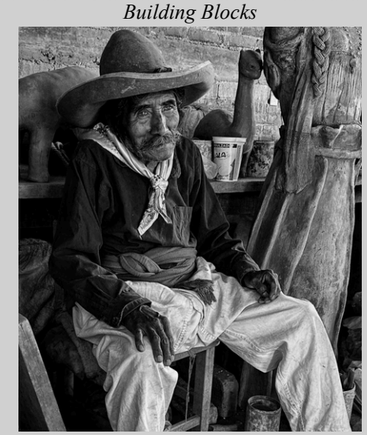
4th Place - Unlimited - Sukumar Balachandran Building Blocks



5th Place - Associate - Kent Sutorius - Lemon Waterfall

Honorable Mention - Associate - Marcus Dagold - Tree

5th Place - Unlimited - Christopher Frisone - Celestial Movement



Honorable Mention - Unlimited - David Paul - At Home in the Studio

Competition Point Totals Compiled by Walter Levy

Baltimore Camera Club standings as of competition date 05/16/2024

Associate Digital		Associate Monochrome		Associate Color		Unlimited Digital		Unlimited Monochrome		Unlimited Color		MOE Points	
Sam Yaffe	95	Tina Whitehead	94	Jim Eichelman	92	Sukumar Balachandran	763	Arthur Ransome	1047	Joan Saba	679	Sukumar Balachandran	51
Linda Lund	92	Michael Washington	82	Errol Bennett	80	Joan Saba	494	Joan Saba	396	Gary Faulkner	503	Tina Whitehead	42
Chris Scroggins	70	Lynn Roberts	72	Scott Houston	74	Arthur Ransome	359	Sukumar Balachandran	381	Roger Miller	371	Joan Saba	40
Keith Hairston	58	Walter Levy	65	Walter Levy	73	David Paul	358	Gary Faulkner	378	Kay Muldoon-Ibrahim	354	Jennifer Smutek	35
Camellia Ibrahim	58	Thomas Gisriel	64	Thomas Anderson	72	Steven Sattler	336	Kay Muldoon-Ibrahim	330	Lewis Katz	346	Lynn Roberts	28
Errol Bennett	58	Charles Levie	46	Lynn Roberts	68	Alan Wilder	269	Roger Miller	282	Kaye Flamm	317	Thomas Gisriel	28
Tina Whitehead	51	Guy Alston	44	Jennifer Smutek	64	Charles Levie	231	Jon Meyer	246	Sukumar Balachandran	223	Michael Washington	27
Guy Alston	46	Jennifer Smutek	43	Michael Washington	61	Kay Muldoon-Ibrahim	214	Kaye Flamm	211	Jon Meyer	198	Guy Alston	25
Kent Sutorius	45	Camellia Ibrahim	40	George Saba	57	Kaye Flamm	212	Richard Eskin	188	Jim Voeglein	182	Kent Sutorius	24
Nelson Smith	43	Errol Bennett	39	Charles Levie	57	Walter Levy	206	Jim Eichelman	157	Paul Biederman	167	Jim Voeglein	21
Roger Johns	34	Keith Hairston	38	Keith Hairston	51	Roger Miller	205	Paul Biederman	152	Harry Bosk	165	Michael Navarre	15
Diane Brunetti	30	Scott Houston	36	Kenny Epps	49	Richard Eskin	204	Jim Voeglein	146	Richard Eskin	155	Sandy Nichols	14
Douglas Miller	29	Thomas Anderson	31	Arthur Ransome	48	Harry Bosk	173	Richard Caplan	141	Vella Kendall	132	Christopher Frisone	13
James Horn	28	Michael Navarre	29	Phyllis Berger	47	Vella Kendall	162	Steven Dembo	141	Steven Dembo	123	Steven Sattler	13
Jennifer Smutek	28	David Paul	28	Kent Sutorius	46	Christopher Frisone	155	Linda Lund	136	Linda Lund	107	Sam Yaffe	13
Jerry Taylor	25	Kent Sutorius	24	Michael Navarre	44	Lewis Katz	154	Lewis Katz	135	Guy Alston	105	Phyllis Berger	11
Thomas Anderson	23	Nelson Smith	21	Thomas Gisriel	29	Kenny Epps	147	Ran Zeimer	134	Ran Zeimer	103	Lewis Katz	10
Laura Kelehan	21	Kenny Epps	16	Marilyn LeMay Patterson	27	Anthony Mordente	143	Sandy Nichols	120	Tina Whitehead	100	Charles Levie	10
Marcus Dagold	19	Diane Brunetti	15	Camellia Ibrahim	26	Jim Voeglein	131	Vella Kendall	117			Alan Wilder	8
Mel Holden	18	Jerry Taylor	14	Vu Nguyen	21	Gary Faulkner	130	Harry Bosk	111			David Paul	8
Alexandria Montanio	18	George Saba	13	Eve Bond	20	Scott Houston	130	Phyllis Berger	108			Chris Scroggins	7
Marilyn Gould	18	Diane Bovenkamp	8	David Paul	18	Michael Navarre	128					Jim Eichelman	6
Vu Nguyen	14	Roger Johns	8	Sandy Nichols	17	Jim Eichelman	126					Arthur Ransome	6
Dan Gutwein	13	Vu Nguyen	8	Jerry Taylor	13	Thomas Gisriel	126					Diane Brunetti	6
Brian Berbary	13	Marilyn LeMay Patterson	5	Nelson Smith	9	Diane Bovenkamp	121					Paul Biederman	6
Rosalind Perry	13	Eve Bond	4	Marcus Dagold	8	Ran Zeimer	118					Eve Bond	5
Wendy Miller	11	Christophe Casamassima	3	Roger Johns	8	Paul Biederman	117					Walter Levy	5
Deborah Davis	9	Peter Hauser	1	Carl Lancaster	8	Sandy Nichols	112					Keith Hairston	5
Michael Mininsohn	7			Rosalind Perry	7	Lynn Roberts	110					Deborah Davis	4
Christophe Casamassima	7			Douglas Miller	6	Vickie Gray	109					Brian Berbary	4
Stephanie Alston-Fisher	5			Christophe Casamassima	6	Phyllis Berger	104					Dan Gutwein	3
Larry Leasner	5			Mel Holden	5	Michael Washington	102					Christophe Casamassima	3
Leo Charpentier	5			Laura Kelehan	2	George Saba	101					Michael Mininsohn	3
Nick & Cynthia Islin	3					Steven Dembo	64					Leo Charpentier	2
Lisa Sartorius	2					Jon Meyer	29					Douglas Miller	2
Sandra Michaels	1											Richard Caplan	2
Cyril Cook	1											Stephanie Alston-Fisher	2
												Kenny Epps	1
												Anthony Mordente	1
												Diane Bovenkamp	1
												Marcus Dagold	1
												Kay Muldoon-Ibrahim	1
												Lisa Sartorius	1
												Sandra Michaels	1

Focal Point April - June 2024

2024 Calendar - July - September

2024/25	Event	Info
Jul 11	Activity Night	**Discussion on Printing:** This fall, print competitions will be in person only. Maybe you don't print your images but want to find out how to do it. Maybe you have questions on how to do a better job printing your images. We invite all members to come and share their expertise on printing and/or ask questions about printing. Some of the topics to be addressed: ● Monitor calibration ● Printers ● Printer settings ● Commercial printers ● What types of paper to use ● Photographic paper companies to use ● Output sharpening ● Mount boards and matting A special resource page will be handed out to those who attend.
Jul 25	Program 21	**Guy Alston: "Putting AI to Work for You"** **Bio:** I have loved science and technology all my life. I read every science and tech book in my elementary school library at the local Enoch Pratt Library. And, in 1981, I got my first computer, an Atari 400. My love of technology led me to my 40-plus-year IT and technology career in the fields of healthcare, education, defense, and television sectors. An early photography influence was my grandfather, a Polaroid fan who took all his family photos with some kind of Polaroid camera. Then in 1989, my father gave me my first camera (a Minolta X700). Actually, my father thought it was broken because it didn't seem to work when someone gave it to him. But all it needed was a battery. Then I spent the '90s trying to take photos that I thought would come close to the ones I saw in the Kodak Guide to 35mm Photography. I, unfortunately, failed miserably. My interest in photography renewed as digital photography emerged. In trying to get my wife to take pictures for herself, I realized her camera eventually would become my camera. The photo bug got me once and for all with smartphones, which caused me to purchase my own point-and-shoot camera. When my wife passed, a couple of grief counselors in Hamden introduced me to grief photography. That's when I decided to do a deep dive into photography. And since my wife's death, I have fully embraced my creative side. **Description:** Guy will share his experiences with "old school computer graphics, give a brief overview of AI and the tools used in AI programs, and then demonstrate how to get your art into AI and train the program to generate various versions of your art.
Aug 1	New Club Year Begins	Membership fees are due
Aug 8	Program 1	**Leo Lubow: "What the Masters Can Teach Us"** **[Details will follow shortly]**
Aug 22	Program 2	**Member Critique Night:** One image per member. Upload image to Visual Pursuits/ "Member Programs – Critiques" Gallery/'Member Critique, Aug 22, Critique Gallery Upload Instructions
Sep 5	Welcome Back Night	Presentation of the best images for 2023-2024 will take place. Join in on congratulating those who win trophies and those who win medals.
Sep 12	Digital Competition 1	
Sep 19	Program 3	
Sep 26	Print Competition 1	

Focal Point

Baltimore Camera Club

The Oldest Continually-Operating Photographic Society in the USA (Incorporated in 1884)

Parting Shot

Born to Ride, Oahu - Michael Navarre

Baltimore Camera Club is a Charter Member Club of the Photographic Society of America

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