

FOCUS



SCHENECTADY PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY NEWS

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January

Number 4

***Photographing the
Night Sky***

***With Matt
Pollock*** page 2

***Sue Gersten
Remembered*** page 3

***The Foundry for Art
and Design*** page 5

Macro Colors page 6

***Enter Contests
and Win*** Page 7

Photographing the Night Sky and Milky Way

With Matt Pollock

"It is light that reveals, light that obscures, light that communicates. It is light I "listen" to. The light late in the day has a distinct quality, as it fades toward the darkness of evening. After sunset there is a gentle leaving of the light, the air begins to still, and a quiet descends. I see magic in the quiet light of dusk. I feel quiet, yet intense energy in the natural elements of our habitat. A sense of magic prevails. A sense of mystery. It is a time for contemplation, for listening - a time for making photographs." - John Sexton

Brief Bio:

From a very early age I became fascinated with nature and the night sky. Whenever anyone asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up I would invariably say "an astronaut" so I guess you could say I have always been a bit spacey and had an affinity for the stars. I have also always been a night person. So in some ways you can say that when I later found a great love for photography, I had found a way to combine all of these into what is now my life's passion – photographing the night sky.

I don't have any formal training as such, just an insatiable will to learn. If I have any secrets to how I get the results I have, it's that I never quit and am never fully satisfied. I have a saying about that.... Great images are made when opportunity meets with talent and persistence. I am always sharpening the tools of my trade. Not much of a secret, but it has served me well. Of late, I am establishing recognition amongst my peers and finding my niche in the field of wide field astrophotography. That is what matters most.



In the past few years I have been doing night sky workshops for the public in general, and for organizations such as the Capitol District Meet up Group and of late have been giving one on one instruction. I have also done some presentations at public libraries and other functions.

It was my great pleasure to give a presentation to the Schenectady Photographic Society last year. Time was limited and I didn't get a chance to go into some of the more advanced methods and techniques many of you had inquired about. I hope to be able to remedy that this time around. I strongly suggest that those who are interested in this subject be prepared to take a lot of notes. I am going to be throwing a lot of source material out there and a lot of links and references. I have had a number of people tell me of late that they felt like they were trying to drink out of a fire hose so be forewarned. My intent is to cover a lot of ground.

Some of the subjects I will be covering are:

Astronomy 101 – crash course on how to find the Milky Way and other celestial bodies you may wish to photograph, and how to know precisely where to point your camera. Better yet, how would you like to line up some of those objects to catch them above or sitting on top of something else you would like in the picture?

Camera settings and minimum equipment necessary to get positive results. - Please be warned, point and shoot camera owners and those who hate tripods or who are unwilling to take their camera out of automatic mode will probably not get much from this presentation. Shooting the night sky is one of the most demanding and unforgiving disciplines out there. When trying to shoot sophisticated images like the Milky Way I suggest you park your cell phone camera in your pocket. ☺

Star procession. How to avoid unsightly "bullet trails" and conversely, how to take stunning star trail shots and the post processing used to get maximum effect.

How to capture lunar details, meteor showers, and firework displays.

Time allowing, I hope to get into post production processes in some depth and detail including panoramic shots.

In Loving Memory

By Kim Koza

On December 18, 2013, our club lost a beloved and award winning member; Sue Gersten. Sue was a fighter throughout her life and a true warrior while battling her 2011 diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. She became a 2.5 year survivor and as recently as November print night, Sue was still winning in print competition at our club meetings. Gersten was an award winning professional photographer, author, lecturer, world traveler and retired school teacher from Albany City School District.

Due to crippling arthritis Sue was confined to a wheelchair for approximately 8 years. She continued to travel, photograph and live her life. After being physically touched by the Pope in Rome during a service, Sue unexpectedly and soon afterwards, found herself able to walk again. She always joked that “he found the only Jew in the joint and cured her!” Sue went on to co-author “Traveling Like Everyone Else”, a guide for the disabled traveler.

Gersten’s photos and travel articles have been published in national consumer magazines, and she was an active participant in the community who, through

her photographic works, touched on the cultural, social and ethnic topics of our time. Sue held MS degrees in Educational Psychology and Reading, and a BS Degree in Elementary Education. In 1976, her outstanding work with both gifted and special needs students was recognized by Albany School District, which named her Teacher of the Year. A student scholarship has been set up in Sues memory and SPS will be awarding and matching this scholarship starting in 2014 for the next 5 years.

Sue attended nearly all Women’s Workshops that were held, enjoyed NECCC in Amherst every year, and held a yearly women’s day at her Burden Lake home that was full of laughter, adventure, photo ops, great food, long boat rides and wonderful women. Sue’s laughter, her amazing sense of humor, her strong sense of self and her companionship will be greatly missed. Our lives were touched by her presence and will be lessened with her passing.

“Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some people move our souls to dance. They awaken us to new understandings with the passing whisper of their wisdom. Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon. They stay in our lives for a while, leave footprints in our heart, and we are never ever the same”.

Chicken Soup for the Soul





***As you danced
in the light
with joy, love
lifted you. As
you brushed
against this
world so
gently, you
lifted us.***

TC Ring



The Foundry for Art Design-Alana Sparrow

Our speaker for the January 8, 2014 meeting will be **Alana Sparrow**, a Founding Principal of the *Foundry for Art Design + Culture, LLC* in Cohoes, NY. Alana is an artist, designer, writer, and marketing communications professional with over 20 years' experience.

I first heard Alana speak during an "Art's marketing on a Shoestring" presentation at the Saratoga Art Center in June 2013. I was impressed by her passion, knowledge and readiness to share her knowledge and insights with the audience. Alana will be sharing some of those insights with us at the January 8, 2014 meeting.

In 2007 The *Foundry for Art Design + Culture, LLC* was incorporated as a social enterprise to inspire economic opportunities in New York's Capital Region by fostering innovative collaborations between creative, cultural and educational institutions, non-profits, businesses and civic institutions.

The mission of The Foundry is to identify and inspire economic opportunities for individuals working in the arts and creative sectors, envisioning art, design and culture driving economic and community development as an integral part of the Capital Region's vibrant metropolitan area.

One of the key services provided by Alana and partner, Jesse Matulis, is to help creative people understand the delicate balance of making art and developing and managing career. They provide the tools to help with career development and entrepreneurs become healthy, independent businesses.

More information about the *Foundry for Art Design + Culture, LLC* and services provided can be found on their website, <http://www.thefoundrysite.com/>.

SPS Members Images Featured

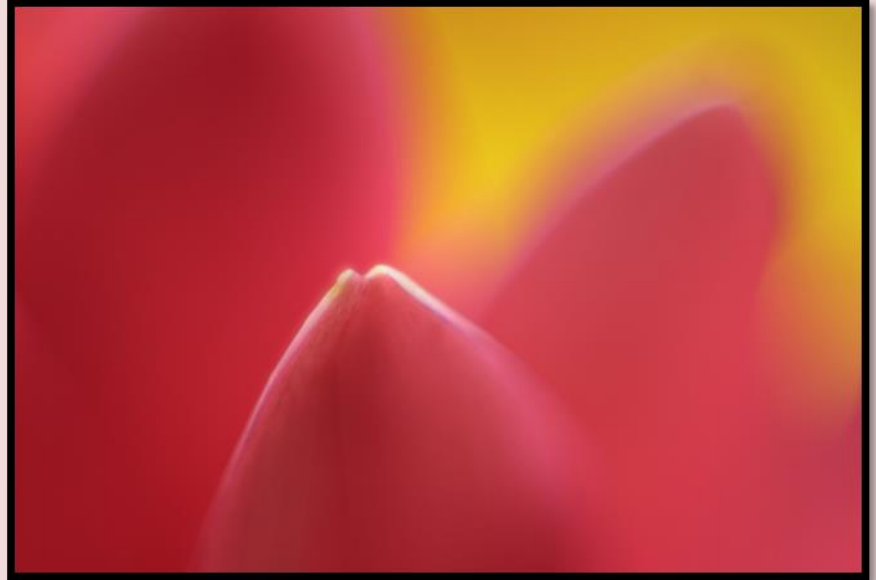
SPS'er Bob Ricardo has had three images featured in the January issue of Photoshop User Magazines Members Gallery.



Macro Colors

by Jeff Perkins

This was a fun project! My goal was to create macro images that were based more on color, design, and composition rather than exacting detail. To do this I used a Canon FD manual lens set at 1.8, mounted on a 3 set of Fotodiox Extension tubes equaling 49mm. This was mounted on my Canon EOS M. The camera was mounted on a Macro slide focusing device, then on a tripod. Focus was first achieved with the lens and then fine-tuned with the Macro Slide. DOF is extremely narrow when the lens is this close to the subject (about an inch) ISO was 800 and shutter at 1/50 sec using soft window light as the primary light source. Because the tubes cause 3-4 stops of light loss, seeing the image brightly enough on the live view viewfinder required a shutter speed of .5 seconds for set

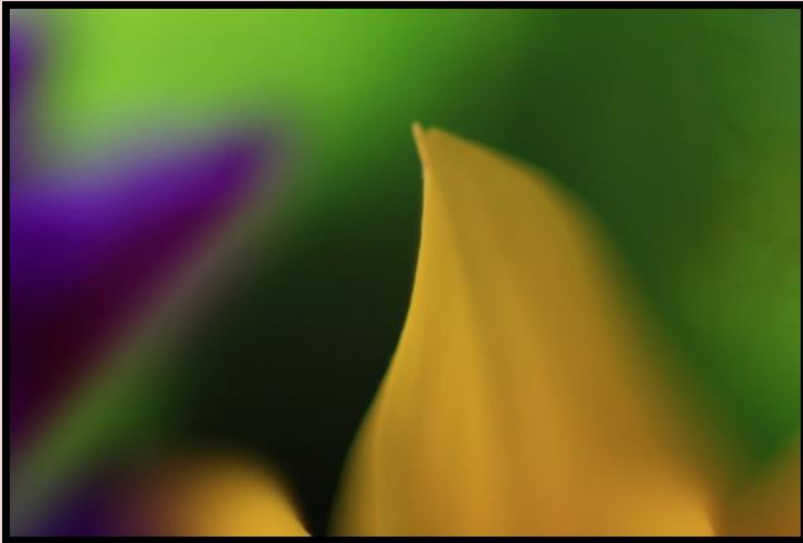


©Jeff Perkins

up. Once I was happy with what I saw, I set the shutter speed to 1/50 to capture the image.

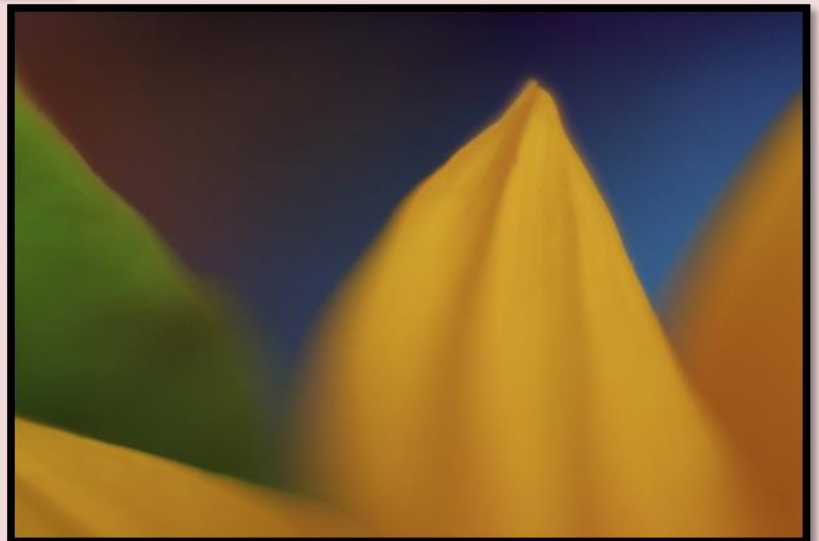
There are many ways to create macro images: extension tubes, macro lenses, close up filters and reversing a lens with an adapter. The most expensive would be a good prime macro, the least a set of these non-coupled aluminum tubes or the lens reversal ring. This is a great rainy day project!

Enjoy, Jeff



©Jeff Perkins

“My goal was to create macro images that were based more on color, design, and composition”



©Jeff Perkins

How to Enter and Win Photo

Contests

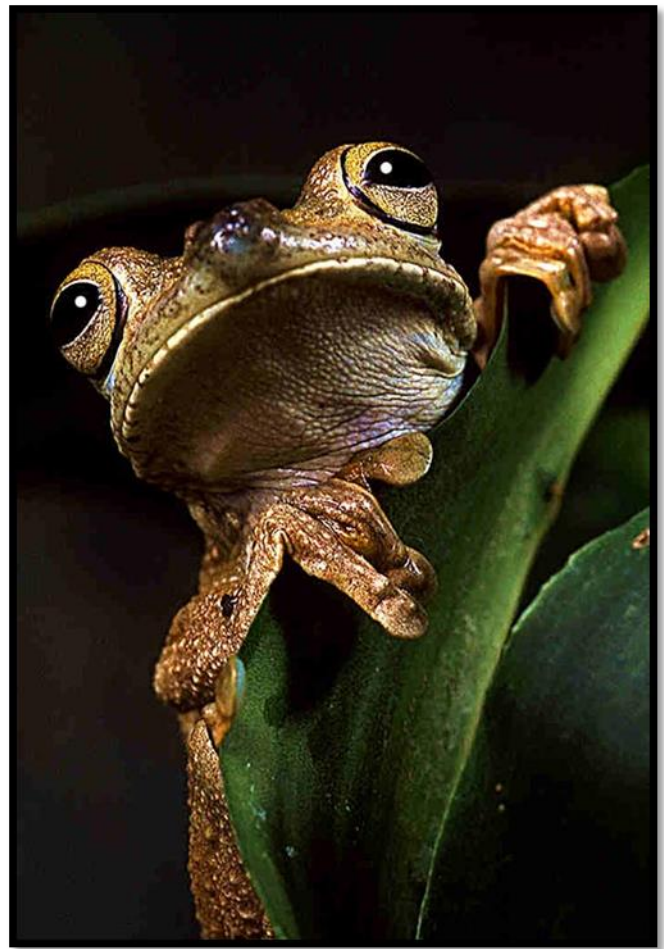
By Ken Deitcher M.D. FPSA

What is a Good photograph? It is very hard definition to define. It can be any image capture you enjoy to look at. Theoretically it should have four elements: Composition, Exposure, Technique and Presentation.

The image should capture the interest of the observer or judge. It may be unique or common but to be a winner should stand out from all the other images.

Compose images that get have some of these features:

Point of Interest	Framing
Background and Foreground	Angle of view
Patterns	Get in close
Cropping	Lines
Avoid mergers	Simplicity
Contrast	Balance
Viewpoint	Direction of Movement
Diagonals	Rule of Thirds



©Ken Deitcher

The first rule is - photograph what you like.

Do not make an image, that you think, the judges will like. If you do

you will never have your own style or individuality.

Keep taking images of all kinds. Build up a portfolio of images that you

can use in the future for competitions, contests and your own use. Try not to limit yourself to one type of image or you will be 'type cast'.

Many judges are subconsciously or are overtly biased. We have all seen this many competitions. A judge may not like 'cats' or 'HDR' images. This should not take place in judging but it does.

Do not 'play' to the judge's interests or you will lose. If a judge is an expert in flower photography he will be super-critical of your flower images or may not prefer flowers at all in his or her judging.

Judges are human and fallible and make mistakes and are not the last word. An image may lose one night and may come in first some other time.



©Ken Deitcher

available, entering contests can enable one to compare his or her works with a vast number of competitive photographers.

Photograph what you like but try at times something different. Break the rules, it may work!

Know where your images are and how to retrieve them. A great image that is lost and cannot be found is an image never taken. Remember an image is a capture in time that cannot be repeated.

Have you noticed that in a catastrophe such as an earthquake, fire or explosion, in which a home is destroyed, the first things the survivors seek are old photographs to remember family, friends and the past moments?

For the photographer who is confident in his or her abilities and is knowledgeable of the techniques



©Ken Deitcher

made props, houses, etc.

Merit awards and honorable mentions are a major recognition of your talent and will be published.

Enter all that you can and submit clean and well mounted images. Do not submit for the judges, submit what you like and do well. When you are picking your images for competition you are really jurying your own images.

Winning is a "high" or "ego trip" of great help in increasing self confidence but rejections are the path to winning. Be prepared to lose more than win. Don't get discouraged! The awards are secondary to the universal recognition and satisfaction of seeing your photo in print.

There are an unlimited number of competitions available to the amateur and part time professional photographer. The lists of submissions are huge and the chance of being selected is quite rare. Don't get discouraged and keep submitting, you may get lucky.

My best advice to the aspiring contestant is to look at past winning photos in magazines. Look at the published yearbooks of winners to get an idea of what to submit.

Many if not all competitions state the explicit categories requested. Go through your files and pick out at least two to three times the number of images that you will be entering.

Nature should be just that-with no evidence of the "hand of man". By this I mean no telephone wires, cars, fences, man-

Rules I have used over the past 40 years are: 1. Don't submit similar images – if the judge doesn't like them you lose twice. 2. Submit images that will catch the judges' eye and interest. If the image is too busy or complicated the person judging will get confused and pass over your image. 3. Watch for large areas of highlights that take your eyes away from the main subject. 4. Do not submit images that are not clean or have a 'flat' appearance. When viewed under the judges' lighting conditions the image may lack snap.

Don't get discouraged. Keep trying. The photos we all have seen at our club competitions are great and could win many international awards. The only way to win is to submit your photos. You will accomplish nothing when all you do is read the periodicals and say to yourself, "I could have done that". Action speaks louder than words. **Get moving! Start competing now!**

I am enclosing several images that were in competition but will not say which were winners. This is irrelevant. Some were first in some competitions and some never placed in others but to me, they are all winners.



©Ken Deitcher

Photo Essay Group and More

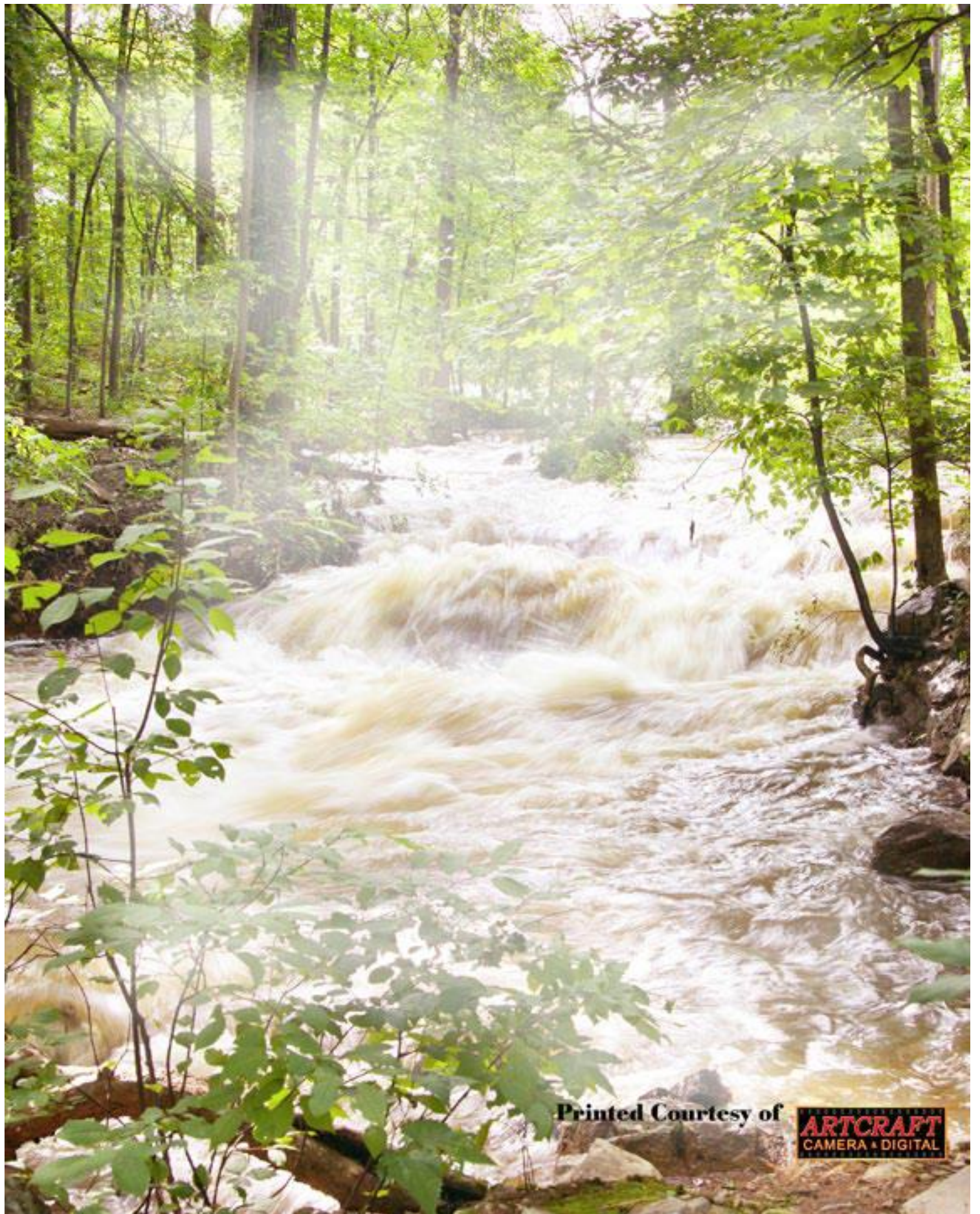
In the end of October we held our first meeting led by Katherine Van Acker at one of the SUNY Albany digital media labs. Those who attended were encouraged to begin their projects and were given a homework assignment to bring images and a beginning of the project to the February meeting. To assist us to meet this goal, she suggested that those who are interested in creating a digital projection essay meet in January to discuss the progress of our projects. If you are working on such an essay please contact Connie Frisbee Houde [globalphotographer@me.com] so that we can set up a meeting after the first of the year to encourage each other as we develop our projects.

SPS member Bob Riccardo and friend Carol Donato of Altamont, NY will have their show "Dirt Track Racing at Fonda Speedway" on display at the Rotterdam Library for the months of December & January & then in the Guilderland Library for the month of February.

Linda Buckman won first place in the 2013 Hagaman Art show and Sue Gersten has had 12 images accepted into the permanent collection at Russell Sage

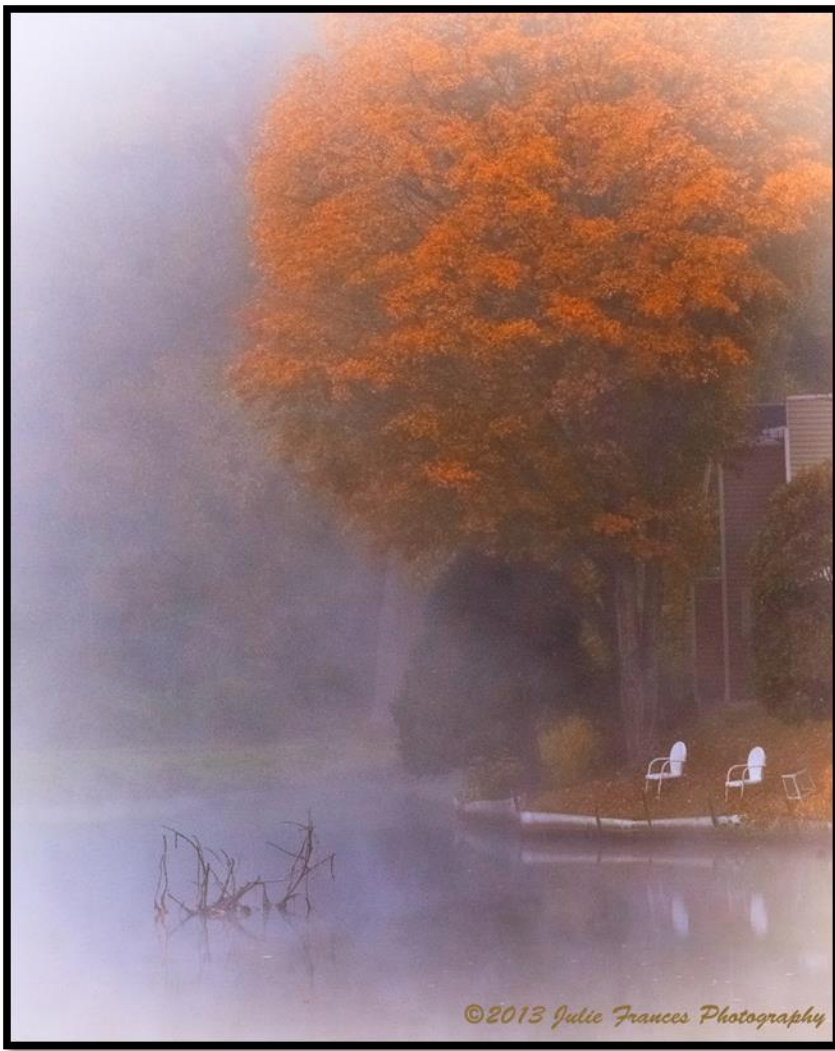


Joan Heffler Photography was awarded the contract to photograph the tri-state (NY, NJ, and PA) trade show and convention for 10,000 real estate agents in Atlantic City.



Editorial Ramblings

By Julie Palyswiat



New Year's Day! That wonderful one day every year when most of us reflect on the past to determine what our New Year's resolution should be. Quit Smoking, lose weight, anger management, save money, those are some of the typical resolutions we all make. All for the betterment of our bodies, minds and or souls, and all very difficult to successfully accomplish. This year I have opted to take on two resolutions and both should result in an improvement on my photography.

As a photographer, or an ever developing photographer, I am always looking to improve my images. Although many people tell me that my work is better than I think, I know what I expect in an image and I never seem to be able to attain that perfection. I know all the rules but sometimes it is just easier not to follow them. You know, wait for the light, use a tripod, and stick to manual. Well I haven't done too badly in retrospect. I have learned to revert back to manual most of the time and I have finally conditioned myself to use a tripod but, except

for on a rare occasion I still tend to find myself out shooting midday rather than during the golden hours. I had one of those rare occasions recently and the proof was definitely in the pudding. I drive Rte. 32 in Waterford on a daily basis and there is a house with their backyard facing the Champlain Canal. There are 2 white chairs sitting on the bank of the canal with a big beautiful tree over them. Many times I have said to myself that I should photograph it. Well one particularly foggy morning in October I thought it would be perfect. So just after 7am I drove down and the scene was fantastic. The foliage was perfect. That morning I took just over 90 shots with exposure bracketing and came home with 6 images that I am extremely happy with. I followed all the rules and got great results. So, what is my New Year's Resolution?

Well my first one is to slow down, use a tripod, shoot in manual and by all means wait for the light! Wait, I have another issue with this. I have to actually get myself out of the house and go shoot. When I first joined SPS my biggest hope was that I would make friends and join them on many photographic field trips. There were a few great field trips but they have been few and far between. So then I joined the Capital District Meet-up group. The concept of the meet-up group is great however; it soon became more of a way for a few people to make money. I did not want to pay anyone to help me get my butt out of the house. Next it was joining the Saratoga Meet-up group and that has been a great experience so far. A group of photographing loving people meeting to do what the love. Funny thing about it though is that there are so many SPS'ers in the group that I have to wonder why are we not doing this through SPS? So, soon after publication of this issue, I intend on starting our own sort of meet-up group which I will send out through email. My hope is to create a calendar that gets passed around through email and if we want to plan a trip you just have to add it into the calendar. At least I am hoping this will work.

The second part of my photographic resolution is to learn a new photo technique every month. First on my list is Creative Bokeh. So, next month I will try and share some results with you but in the meantime, Thanks for reading!

See the Winners



Left: *Crazy Crystal*
By Luba Ricket

2nd Place
Projected-
Assigned

Photographed on
dining room table
in natural light and
flipped in
Photoshop



Above: *Fire Escape Through the Lens*

By David Avigdor

Honorable Mention Projected-
Assigned

Nikon D7000 85mm

1 sec f16 ISO 100

Eldridge Street Synagogue
NY, NY



Right: *Night Flyte*
by Ken Deitcher

Honorable
Mention Projected -
General

Processed in
Photoshop CS6
with many layers



Right: *Glass Shapes*
by Barb Lawton

Honorable Mention
Projected- Assigned

Fuji Film Fine Pix F20

1/400 f3.2 ISO 400

Tweaked in
Photoshop CC

And NIK SilverEfex
Taken at TJ Max



Above: *Through the Woods* By Luba Ricket
Honorable Mention Projected-General
Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa in Milton, NY
I was playing with the image in Topaz ... BuzSim



Above: *Reflections*
Ken Deitcher
1st place Projected – General
Taken following a spring rain
with a Canon 50 D camera.
Processed in
Photoshop CS6. No special
manipulation

Below: *Wine Bar*
By Ron Ginsburg
1st Place Projected - Assigned



Below: *Mbouda Tree*
By Jess Hohenstein
Honorable Mention Projected - General



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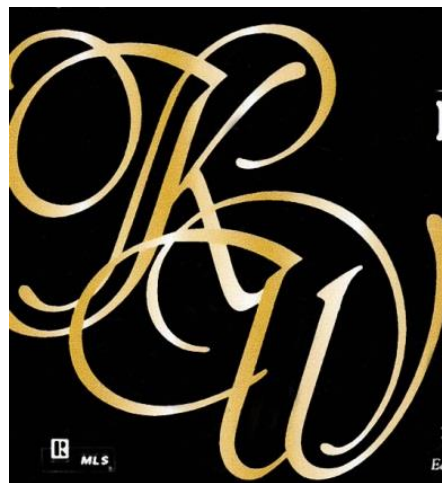
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SPS Calendar

Date	Speaker	Title
1/08/2014	Alana Sparrow	"Marketing and Pricing your Photographs"
1/15/2014	Paul Castle	TBA
1/22/2014	Matt Pollock	"Photographing the Night Sky and Milky Way"
1/29/2014	Gayle Bennett	"Framing"

January Competitions

January 8th

Print – Social Issues

An image that portrays something that directly affects today's society

January 15th

Projected Image – Toy Photography

Include 1 or more toys on the fun journey



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