

# FOCAL POINTS

## Vienna Photographic Society

*FEBRUARY, 2018*

*INSIDE:*

Winter Photo Ops

Cold Case

iPhone Convert

Antelope Canyon

Skunked

Calendar of Natural  
Spectacles



**FEBRUARY, 2018**

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VPS is a member of



<https://www.PSA-photo.org>

**VPS meets the first, third, and fourth Wednesdays, September through June at the Thoreau Middle School in Vienna, VA. Visitors are welcome. Please check VPS's calendar for details.**

**<https://www.VPSva.org>**



# Winter's Wonders

By Barbara J. Saffir



Ice skating on the C&O Canal, 1/1/18 by Rob Welker

Hate winter or love it? There's good news for *both* of you.

The good news for winter *haters* is that the days are already growing longer and the DMV's coldest month (January) is behind

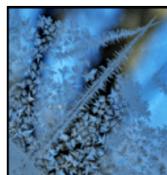
them. The good news for winter *lovers* is that some of winter's most wondrous days occur in February -- and historically, it's a *skosh* snowier. Either way, there are gobs of once-a-year photo ops that both groups can take advantage of.

Winter *haters* can find flowers already popping out of the frigid earth, such as yellow and cranberry-colored skunk cabbage, blush-tinted hellebores, yellow to orange witch hazel, winter-white snow drops, and sunshine-yellow winter jasmine.

Winter *aficionados* can shoot ice skaters spinning around the outdoor rink on the National Mall; snowboarders whooshing down slopes; the Washington Monument on a blanket snow; or, if you're lucky, the uncommonly frozen Potomac River.

Both groups can exploit the leafless landscape to capture otherwise hidden subjects, like the secret lives of birds. Colorful cardinals, cartoonish chickadees, and other bird beauties can't hide. Bald eagles are warming eggs in their massive nests. Some exquisite embassies and other buildings, which are usually concealed by a landscape curtain, put on a public show. Mountain hikes pay off with unobscured jaw-dropping views. And the cold scares off snakes, spiders, and ticks! Indoor photo ops also abound, such as photographing your friends and furry loved ones, shooting live butterflies at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, or capturing the Library of Congress's uber-ornate interior.

If you exploit February's unique opportunities, please share your pix with your fellow VPS members on Flickr, on Facebook, and in "Focal Points."



**COVER PHOTO BY GINA CLAUTICE**

*Ice crystals on a window. Art in nature always amazes me. - Gina Clautice*

# Cold Case

## ***Bag Your Camera to Protect It***

*By John Naman*

*VPS member John Naman shares his techie tips every so often. This month he's tapping his years of experience and knowledge obtained first hand, from fellow photographers, and from photography books and online sources. - Editor*

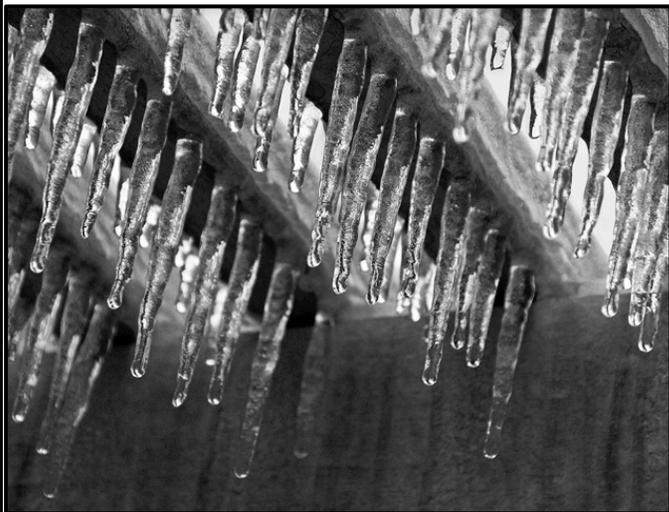
Cold weather causes problems for photographers. For some, the following lesson may be a review. For others, a new and important warning.

When you're photographing outdoors in the cold, put your camera (or phone) into a clear plastic bag **before** you bring it into a warm car or building. That keeps condensation off the camera, lens, and electronics. Condensation is water that makes electronic gizmos go, *Bzzt!*



*Photo by John Naman*

*Zap!* and then they die when you turn them on. Remove the bag after 30 to 60 minutes after your gizmos reach room temperature. Then, store them in open air -- never in a closed case, lens pouch, or bag.



*Photo by John Naman*

Fungus grows in closed bags. Clear plastic bags include Ziploc® baggies, clear 30-gallon trash bags or a dry-cleaning bag tied with a rubber band. (Use clear bags so you don't trash your equipment by mistake.)

Keep one or two bags in your camera case or rubber band them to your tripod. Don't leave home without one! If you mess up and forget a plastic bag, while you are still outside, take off your coat and wrap your camera in it and then go indoors. If you double mess up and bring the camera into



*Photo by Charlie Kennedy*

a warm house or car, immediately go back outside or into an unheated garage to let your camera get cold again for about 10 minutes. Then bag it and go back inside.

If my camera or phone gets rained on or snowed on, I carry a towel in my car to wrap my camera in the towel and then bag the towel. If I'm shooting outdoors, I go to the car to get the towel before coming in or leave the camera outside on a porch, go inside

to get a towel, and then come back out. When it warms up inside for about a half hour, then I dry my camera as best as possible without taking the lens off, and leave it overnight on a table to dry. The next day, store it in an open camera bag or open lens pouch.

When it snows, a big golf umbrella keeps snow flakes away from the lens, so you don't get white blobs. The first two to three feet in front of the lens is white blob territory. Of course, the umbrella works for rain, too. Good luck holding your umbrella while shooting. Maybe you can acquire a voice-actuated, remote-controlled umbrella holder. Or a human helper.

Tripods don't care about water. There's no need to bag them. Just wipe them down after they return to room temperature.

Remember all this next summer! Going from a cold, air-conditioned room to the warm, humid outdoors kills electronics, too. A friend of mine vacationing in the Caribbean took his camera outside on the balcony to shoot and fried it instantly. Instead, bag it and put it outside for a few minutes. That way it will just warm up and not get cooked. Best of luck!



*Photo by Charlie Kennedy*

# Nature's Calendar

## *Some of the Mid-Atlantic's Awesome Photo Ops*

***Don't miss the show!*** Use this calendar of some awesome nature spectacles in and around the DMV to help you discover award-winning photo ops. The time frame can vary, depending on the weather. For details and locations, consult the must-read nature guides listed at the end. - ***Barbara J. Saffir***

### **JANUARY**

Bald Eagles start nesting  
Flying squirrels huddle in trees hollows and squirrel boxes  
Cranefly orchids display purple leaves  
Tundra swans and diving ducks (bufflehead, mergansers, etc.) overwinter  
Dark-eyed juncos and white-throated sparrows visit

### **FEBRUARY**

Skunk Cabbage transforms from female to male  
Maple syruping heats up  
Search for multi-million year old sharks' teeth fossils  
Long-tailed salamanders breed  
Great blue herons return to heronries



### **MARCH**

Spring peeper frogs' deafening chorus and wood frogs mate  
Black-crowned night herons return to rookery at National Zoo  
Ospreys return and geese begin to depart  
Woodcocks display  
Spicebush blooms



### **APRIL**

Flower explosion includes Virginia bluebells and wild orchids  
Great blue herons and cormorants nest by Great Falls  
Ruby-throated hummingbirds return  
Morel mushroom hunting  
National Arboretum azaleas start blooming



## MAY

Millions of trillium carpet Thompson Wildlife Management Area  
Horseshoe crab and shorebird frenzy  
More than 30 warblers migrate through and prothonotary warblers stay  
Pale pink and white mountain laurel blossoms  
Carnivorous pitcher plants and hummingbird moths at Suitland Bog



## JUNE

Fawns born  
Mulberries ripen  
Fireflies in the DMV and synchronous fireflies in NC/SC  
Prickly pear cactus, milkweed, and wild rhododendrons bloom  
Scarlet tanagers nest



## JULY

Pink Asian lotuses and yellowish-white native lotuses peak  
Sunflowers, adored by Indigo Buntings & goldfinches, peak  
Rattlesnake mating starts  
Purple passion flowers and native hibiscus bloom  
Blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries ripen



## AUGUST

American goldfinches nest  
Shorebird migration  
Ghost crabs patrol beaches  
Bats put on show at dusk  
Orange and yellow Jewelweed (hummingbird magnets) blooms



## SEPTEMBER

Paw paw fruit ripens  
Monarch butterflies migrate  
Chimney swift and tree swallow flocks  
Exposed earthquake fault by National Zoo  
Gray catbirds gobble pokeweed berries before migrating



## OCTOBER

Hawk migration  
Fringed gentians bloom at Soldier's Delight serpentine barrens  
Brook trout spawn  
Fall color peaks  
Dig for fossils at dinosaur park



## NOVEMBER

Fall-blooming camellias  
Bald Eagles mass at Conowingo Dam  
Whitetail deer rut  
Winter ducks arrive  
Persimmons ripen and osage oranges fall



## DECEMBER

America's smallest owls hang out (northern saw-whet owls)  
Christmas fern brightens khaki-colored forests  
Asiatic bittersweet fruits  
Mistletoe stands out  
Red-headed woodpeckers bustle around



*"A Year Across Maryland: A Week-by-Week Guide to Discovering Nature in the Chesapeake Region,"* by Bryan MacKay, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.

*"Seasonal Guide to the Natural Year:(MidAtlantic): A Month by Month Guide to Natural Events,"* by Scott Weidensaul, Fulcrum Publishing, 1992.

*"Field Guide to the Natural World of Washington, DC,"* by Howard Youth, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.

*"Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area,"* by Cristol Fleming, Marion Blois Lobstein, and Barbara Tufty, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

# Winter Wildlife

*By Patricia Deege*



Winter is a tough season for photographers when the temperature plunges into the teens and hands freeze and batteries die quickly in the bitter cold. It is harder to pluck up the courage and energy to brave the weather and get outside with the camera. However, we are not the only ones that find winter a difficult time of the year; local wildlife has a very hard time-- both for finding food and also shelter.



Despite living in an urban area, there are still a lot of wild creatures that live amongst us. The birds especially are ubiquitous in their visits to the feeders. We have cardinals, blue jays, nuthatches, finches, sparrows, robins and even a young hawk that was probably looking for the chipmunks that scavenge the seed thrown out by the little birds feeding overhead. This week once again I had family of bluebirds that came to rest very briefly on my feeder, their lovely blue feathers showing up against the softly



falling snow. They stayed too briefly for any pictures, but were a delight to observe through my window.

There are other four-footed friends, and although it is not always easy to see them, they leave traces of their presence when the snow falls and tracks are visible in the smooth expanse of untrodden snow. The squirrels are constant visitors and, in the local park, we quite often see the deer, traveling in small herds and searching for



what sustenance remains in the woods in these frigid temperatures. Although they remain unseen, foxes and rabbits leave their footprints on the driveway, a clear indication that our garden provides a haven for such creatures.

Winter is beautiful, the air crisp and clear especially at night when the clouds have disappeared. The moon hangs like a golden orb above the darkened landscape, a tempting subject to photograph if one can brave the extreme temperatures. Trees cast



vivid shadows over snowy landscapes and, although color is usually lacking, there are many opportunities for wonderful black and white images. So get out there with the camera and record our winter landscape. Dress warmly, carry extra batteries and happy shooting!

# Bucket List Trip:

## *Antelope Canyon*

By David Kepley



In November I had the good fortune to visit Antelope Canyon near Page, AZ. Page is located on the Colorado River about 100 miles northeast of the Grand Canyon. It was a follow-on trip from my photo workshop at Valley of Fire State Park, which is about an hour north of Las Vegas.

There are several memorable photo ops near Page.

**Glen Canyon Dam.** This is a huge dam on the Colorado River. If you enjoy shots of architectural marvels, this is for you! A highway goes over the top of the dam. There is a nice parking lot on the south side with some short hiking trails that will give you some great vantage points. The dam, of course, has created a huge lake behind it, which also offers some fascinating possibilities with water and boats in the middle of the desert and some small mountains sticking up through the water.

**Horseshoe Bend.** Over the eons as the Colorado River snaked its way westward downstream of the dam, it carved some incredibly deep canyons. One of the most famous is Horseshoe Bend. You can park about a mile from the bend and walk right up to the brink. It is about a 1000-foot drop to the bottom. (Be careful!) I spent a lot of time on my stomach with my camera hanging over the edge trying to get a shot that included the whole bend. Think wide-angle lens! Okay, my knees were knocking!





**Antelope Canyon.** There are several famous slot canyons near Page that are on Navajo land. These canyons are bucket-list items for landscape photographers! A slot canyon is one that has been carved over the millennia by water out of the native Navajo sandstone. The sandstone is reddish/pinkish/orangish in color. The canyons can be a few feet wide and then can open up into chambers as large as the footprint of your house or more. They can be between 100-200 feet deep. As the sun peaks through the canyon, it lights up the walls in incredible ways. It looks like modern sculpture!

If you get a chance to go, sign up for the "Photographer's tour." To be considered a photographer, you must show up with a DSLR and a tripod. Hey, that's their rule! Since the canyons are on Navajo land they also require you to have a Navajo guide. The Upper Antelope Canyon tour lasts about two hours and costs \$120 for the tour and an \$8 Navajo Parks and Recreation fee. The guide takes you to Owl Canyon (yep, there is an owl in there!), Rattlesnake Canyon (didn't see any of those than goodness!), and then Upper Antelope Canyon. When you get into Upper Antelope, because it is so crowded, they will instruct you on

where to stand to shoot and then will hold up the other tourists for just two minutes while you get your shot without people in it. They do this at multiple locations in the canyon. I know, I know, that's incredibly stifling, but it's their rule.

The next day our group went to Lower Antelope Canyon. It is equally spectacular! I paid about \$50, plus the \$8 Navajo Parks and Recreation fee. I just checked the website and they are no longer offering photo tours. Rats!

So go for it!

#### **Camera settings:**

- \* Use a tripod, there is not much light in there!
- \* You will need long shutter speeds. I was shooting at 8-12 seconds with an ISO of 100 and an f stop usually around f8-f16.
- \* Bracket your shots. Often you will get really bright spots near the top and very dark areas deep in the canyon. I was HDRing them in Lightroom when I got home.
- \* Try not to get too upset with their rules!
- \* Enjoy one of nature's incredibly beautiful spots!

#### **FOR MORE INFO:**

**Glen Canyon Dam:** <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/crsp/gc/>

**Horseshoe Bend:** <https://horseshoebend.com/>

**Upper Antelope Canyon:** [https://navajotours.com/tour-packages/ - book-a-tour](https://navajotours.com/tour-packages/-book-a-tour)

**Lower Antelope Canyon:** <http://lowerantelope.com/photographer-tour/>

# Jan. 17 Competition Results

## Judge Greg Holden

### Monthly Theme: Abstracts in Nature (Digital Art)- 30 entries

1st Place	<b>David Heagy</b>	Field in Wind
2nd Place	<b>Carol Carroll</b>	Vibrant Colors in the Woods
3rd Place	<b>Gina Clautice</b>	Blue (8254788)
HM	<b>Carol Shoemaker</b>	Aloe
HM	<b>Sharon M Connolly</b>	Carnation Curly Edges
HM	<b>Kathrin Swoboda</b>	Over the Lake
HM	<b>Kathleen Furey</b>	Thirty-two



### Monthly Theme: Simplicity – 29 entries

1st Place	<b>Kathleen Furey</b>	White
2nd Place	<b>Patricia Deege</b>	Wind Ripples No. 2
3rd Place	<b>Joan Axilbund</b>	Universal Bond
HM	<b>David Kepley</b>	Question?
HM	<b>Bill Mugg</b>	Flamingo Yoga
HM	<b>Gwen Bowden</b>	Lonesome Roll
HM	<b>John Padbury</b>	Prairie Grass



### Open Digital Novice – 10 Entries

1st Place	<b>Gina Clautice</b>	Snow 09
2nd Place	<b>Gordon Hay</b>	What do you Mean!
3rd Place	<b>Clement Ammann</b>	D-ring in Motion



### Open Digital Advanced – 12 Entries

1st Place	<b>Joan Axilbund</b>	False Water Cobra
2nd Place	<b>George Silvas</b>	The Storm
3rd Place	<b>John Padbury</b>	Knots and Strings
HM	<b>John Sichenze</b>	B&W Landscape



### Open Prints: Combined Novice & Advanced –8 Entries

1st Place	<b>Bill Mugg</b>	Venice Beach
2nd Place	<b>Janet Gelb</b>	Columns and Arches



*Great photos everyone! A reminder: Please don't put your name or initials on your image in the competition or in the title of the image when downloading it for competition. - Janet Gelb, VP Competitions*

# Feb. 7 Speaker: Arthur Ransom

## *Discover Yourself Through Photography*

Thoreau Middle School, 7:30 p.m.



Photography has the capacity to convey both subject and emotion. Whether we are photographing a friend or stranger, our pets, our backyard or a grand vista at a national park, we want our photographs to capture not only what we saw but what we felt. These feelings are personal—we are all individuals with our own thoughts, experiences and imagination—so each of us has different emotional responses to the subjects in front of our lenses. Expressing these inner feelings through photography can be a profoundly satisfying activity, one that adds depth

and meaning to our lives. If our images stimulate feelings in others, our efforts even more satisfying. We want viewers (and ourselves, too) to feel an emotional relationship to the characters, places and events we photograph, and to hear the wind rustling through the leaves of the trees and feel the cold of a winter's day. How can we get in touch with our own emotions and infuse our images with those emotions? Departing from the colorful world we live in, Arthur takes you into his black and white world to show you how he expresses his emotions photographically. And he discusses how photographic style evolves as you cultivate and grow your emotional intelligence...and "discover yourself".



A relative latecomer to fine art photography, Arthur began his photographic life when scuba diving in Puerto Rico during the six years that he lived there. Scuba diving introduced Arthur to sights that he could only describe through the photographs that he made. Although moving to the Washington DC / Baltimore area in 2005 stopped the scuba diving, but continued to seek imagery above sea level. Working mainly with 35mm format cameras and sometimes large format, 4x5 view cameras (slowly using up his stock of very out of date



Polaroid PN 55 film), Arthur photographs the black and white world that he sees around him. Although his subject matter is varied, he chooses subjects that express emotion and a sense of time, place and being. Amongst others, Arthur's work has been featured in *Lenswork*, *B&W* and *Silvershotz Magazine* and has been included in several exhibitions around the United States. He has published two books of his work, *Lonaconing Silk Mill: Portrait of a Place* and *Iceland, A Journey Into Dreams*.

Arthur is an active speaker at national and international photography events as well as camera clubs. His work can be seen on his website (<http://www.aransomphoto.com>), where he also maintains an active blog in which he notes his feelings, thoughts and philosophy about photography.

# Feb. 21 Competition

***Judge: Jim Steele***

*Thoreau Middle School, 7:30 p.m.*



Jim Steele is a photographer who works primarily in the tradition of B/W masters Ansel Adams and Edward Weston using medium and large format film photography but has recently included digital as it is now the standard imaging process. Growing up in a small town in Missouri, his interest in photography started very early, around the age of 12 which required actually using his mother's baking dishes for processing the film! Today, Jim's photos of Land, Sea, and Body represent the finest of both traditional and digital photography.

Jim has studied with distinguished mentors such as Cole Weston, George Tice, Joyce Tennyson, Christopher James as well as others. In addition to film, his digital equipment includes Nikon and Canon as well as digital printers from HP and Canon. His ongoing interest in photography has led him to teach both classes and workshops around the area including classes on digital printing. He has taught at The Art League School in Alexandria, The Smithsonian VIS-ARTS in Washington DC, and Photoworks in Glen Echo, MD. He has also guest-lectured at Georgetown University. Jim's work can be seen in Studio 343 at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, VA and also on his website: <http://www.photographybysteele.com/>

## ***February Themes***

**Black and White:** In this theme your images should display black and white tones that lack color and include neutral tones of black and white and intermediate shades of grey in a subject of your choosing. Photographs in sepia tones are also acceptable.

**Winter Digital Art:** Winter is the coldest season of the year. It occurs during the months of December through February, and snow and freezing temperatures are typical. Winter can be conveyed through a range of images from a ferocious blizzard, to a quiet scene of pristine beauty. The focus of your image is your choice, and it need not be limited to landscapes. This is a Digital Art theme, which means you may transform your original photo into something more akin to fine art with apps, filters, textures, software, etc. of your choosing.

## My Fav Photo

*By Lisette Brisebois*

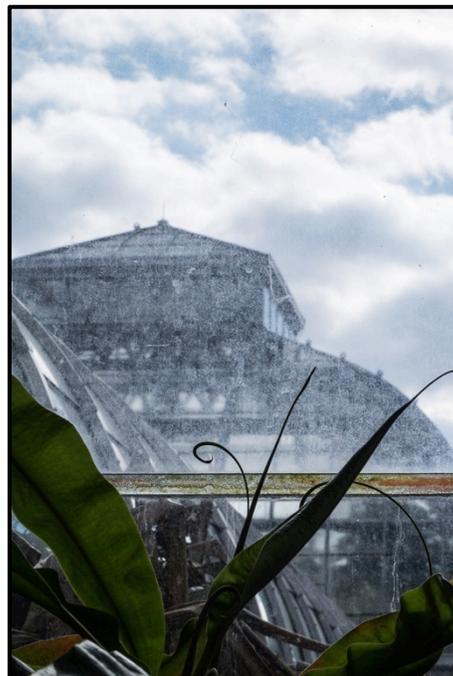
I was delighted to catch this woman at the Frederick, MD farmers' market feeding pizza to her pet cockatoo. How cool! (And she even has an Ewok tattoo.)



## My Fav Photo

*By Robert Kelberg*

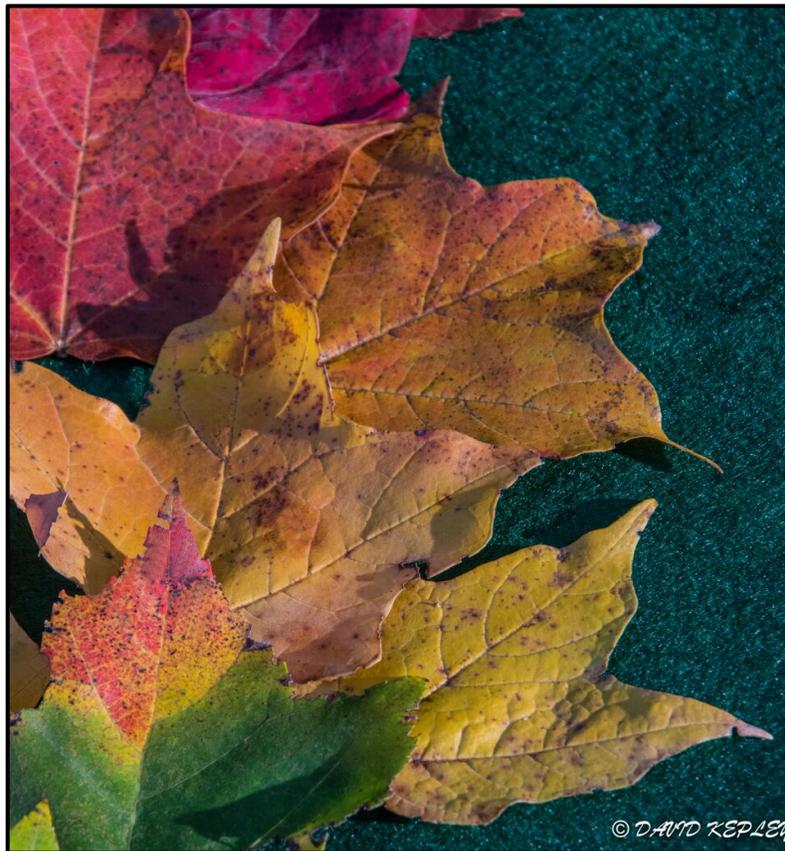
A great day at the U.S. Botanical Garden. The photo on the left is an interesting perspective of a succulent. The photo on the right is one of the garden's pavilions taken through the very dirty window of the cactus pavilion.



# My Fav Photo

*By David Kepley*

Each autumn I just can't get enough of the fall colors. There must be something I can do with all of those greens, yellows, oranges, and reds! To me, it looks like "Mother Nature" is going crazy with her paint brush! How to capture that feeling? In this photo I tried to show the movement of color in the leaves through those stages. I'm not sure it works as a photo, but I'm sure impressed with the artistry Mother Nature has put on display!! Now how to capture it photographically! Hmmmm.



# My Fav Photo(s): *Skunk Cabbage*

By Barbara J. Saffir

While we're huddling around the fireplace trying to escape the cold, skunk cabbage -- our earliest blooming wildflower -- is bravely stirring to life in the muck beside our creeks. This cute little skunk cabbage isn't even cold. Even when it's frigid outside, this plant creates a snugly 72 degrees Farenheit inside its hood-like spathe to attract the pollinating flies and beetles that survive the winter in the forest's leaf litter. If you want to see a skunk cabbage, just trek beside a creek in a muddy area, such as Wolf Trap Creek near the boardwalk at Navy Federal Credit Union's headquarters. (820 Follin Lane SE, Vienna, 38.9050590, -77.2434650) You might have to look hard to see its cranberry and green colors poking up through the muck. But by the summer these plants have exploded into a jungle of huge tropical green leaves flanking the streams.

At this time of year it's fun to photograph these roughly 4-inch high plants as they transform from female to male. When they're female, the golf-ball-like spadix inside its spathe is cranberry colored. The ball, which is covered with tiny flowers, turns yellow when it becomes male.

So how did the skunk cabbage get its name? It doesn't *always* stink. But when it does, the Virginia Native Plant Society describes it as "pungently malodorous."

(<http://vnps.org/wildflowers-of-the-year/2009-skunk-cabbage-symplocarpus-foetidus/>)

I learned more about this unique plant recently when I attended a skunk cabbage hike at the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, 1361 Wrighton Rd, Lothian, MD. Jug Bay also offers gobs of other fun hikes and unique educational opportunities. For details, visit: <http://jugbay.org/>



Looking down into *cranberry-colored*  
FEMALE flower



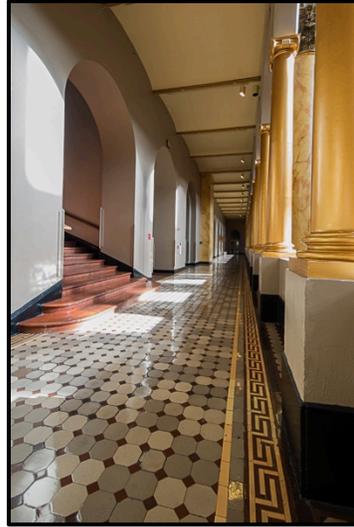
Looking down into the *yellow*  
MALE flower



# Jan. 13 Field Trip Report

## National Building Museum

*Photos By Terry Goplerud*



*Text and Photos By Lori Saunders, VP, Field Trips*

VPS members visited the National Building Museum in Washington DC, on a very cold day, so we were glad to be inside. I was joined by returning member, **Marge Lynum**, new member **Alisha Mauck**, as well as **David Kepley**, **Carol Carroll**, **Janet Gelb**, **Robert Kelberg**, **Gordon Hay**, **Terry Goplerud**, and **Steve Brown**. We all enjoyed exploring the balconies to get different vantage points of the very striking architecture, as well as stopping in some of the exhibits and listening in on a tour. At lunchtime, several of us ventured down the street to a restaurant specializing in craft beer. Some great photos from the day have already been posted to the Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/107509176593979/>) and Flickr groups (<https://www.flickr.com/groups/vienna-photographic/>), so be sure and check those out as well. Photos from the field trip are featured on the banners.



# Create a Shutterfly Desk Calendar

By Morton H. Friedman



ASPECT RATIO = 0.7



ASPECT RATIO = 1.4



ASPECT RATIO = 1.8

One way to remember the excellent photos we've created over time -- or at least 12 of them -- is to use them to decorate a desk calendar. Shutterfly is a relatively easy package for doing this. The downside of Shutterfly is that it often adds distracting graphics or images of its own; it can crop your images mercilessly; and it doesn't hesitate to run your images right into the spiral binding that holds the sheets for each month together. Here's how to keep all that from happening.

As an introduction, to see what your calendar layout will look like, go to

<http://www.shutterfly.com/calendars/desk-calendars>.

The calendar proper is on the right, while the image occupies the space to its left. We want the image to fill as much of the image space as possible, without losing any of the image or entering the "forbidden zone" where the spiral resides. You do this by pasting your image on a canvas that fills the entire space reserved for it (except, of course, the forbidden zone).

So, before you even start with Shutterfly, you want to place your selected images on a standard canvas that replicates the left portion of the calendar page: the "available space."

In Shutterfly's desk calendar, the space available for each image is 7" wide by 5.5" high. The spiral binding at the top of the sheet is a bit less than 0.5," so the image height should not exceed 5".



Accordingly, the aspect ratio (AR) of an image that fills the entire available space is 1.4.

To maximize the size of the image (or, more generally, to position the image in the available space), I use Photoshop to paste the image on a canvas. To maximize the size of the image in the available space, bring up the image; go to Image>Image Size and change dimensions from “pixels” to “inches.” Set the image width to 7” if AR is greater than 1.4; set image height to 5” if AR is less than 1.4”. Click “OK.”

Go to Image>Canvas Size and set the canvas width to 7” and the height to 5.5.” A canvas of this size occupies the entire available space to the left of the calendar proper, including the forbidden zone. I use an extension color of white for simplicity; you can also make the canvas transparent.

The anchor box on the Canvas Size screen controls the placement of the image in the 7” by 5” portion of the canvas below the spiral. If the image width is 7” (AR>1.4), it will just fit horizontally, and can be positioned vertically (I set it at the base of the canvas); if the image height is 5” (AR<1.4), the image necessarily sits at the base of the canvas and can be moved laterally. (I center it within the canvas; that is, halfway between the calendar proper and the left edge of the sheet.)

Rename and save each image on its canvas.

Next, you lay out your calendar. From here on, it’s all Shutterfly. Return to the .../desk-calendars site. Choose the starting month and year, and click on “Get started.”

Pick a style using the Style tab. Photo Gallery is the cleanest style and allows you to use the entire available space. Accept the changes.

Click the Edit tab and select the layout that fills the entire space to the left of the calendar proper with a single image. This provides maximum flexibility regarding image size.

Load your images - on their canvases - into Shutterfly. Click on "Get pictures." This takes you to a screen where you can drag-and-drop or select photos from your computer. Click “Add” to import them into the calendar tray, from which you can drag them onto the calendar.

Select each month in turn at the top of the page, drag the desired image+canvas onto that page, and repeat for each month. The canvas will fully cover the available picture space. Three pages from a desk calendar I made, showing a range of aspect ratios, are shown.

Finally, pick an image for the cover and place it where you choose.

# Great Fun with Smart Phone Cameras and Lenses

*By Lisette Brisebois*

Photographers worldwide are thanking Apple and other cell phone manufacturers for putting cameras on smart phones.

I had a camera on my old low-tech cell phone but in the best conditions, its photos were not sharp. When I asked for help from people close to me who used their cell phone cameras extensively, they would throw their hands up in the air (clutching their cell phones) and walk away briskly. My phone's camera was not up to their exalted standards.

Last year, on a Vienna Photographic Society excursion, Barbara Saffir pointed out that the smart phone I longed for would not only provide a great camera but also easy-breezy navigation. Not only that, but she demonstrated it in seconds. How appealing for someone who once wound up on a dirt road while driving on I-95. That got me thinking about a smart phone's GPS.

This December I got my first iPhone. It is such great fun. Its photos are big and bouncy and sharp. Bouncy because I haven't quite figured out how quickly to press the button and, of the available buttons which take photos, which one suits me. Leave your finger down too long and you get multiple photos. Don't watch the screen and you are taking movies of stationary objects.





Clearly I needed help, so I consulted Google. There is lots of Google info out there on iPhone cameras, but I did not find the "How To" I needed. I checked a few books out of the library, The Dummy books were duds. However, I did find the "Missing Manual" book, which is over 600 pages, to be almost perfect. That covers not only the iPhone's camera, but the entire phone. Even at that length, the author slides over some subjects a newbie would like spelled out step by step. That book has become my iPhone bible.

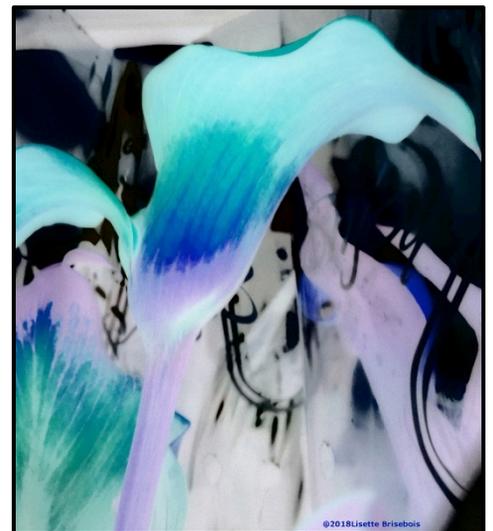
A huge surprise has been the set of lenses I was given to use. The Ztylus set I have fits on the back of the Ztylus "iCamera" case which comes with it. There are four basic lenses: the CPL (Circular Polarizer Filter), Wide Angle Lens, Super Micro Lens, and Extreme Fish Eye Lens.

Since my son attached the case and lens kit to my camera, I have been unable to remove them, so be careful what you wish for. The lenses flip out of the round revolving case and over the lens of the camera in seconds. The fish eye, while a one-trick pony, is intriguing and something new to me. I recently used the wide angle lens to catch a shot which I would have otherwise missed.

Another surprise was being hit by the fact that my free storage for backups and photography was going to be exceeded in the first two months I had the phone. More storage space could be acquired for a fee. The cheap and effective solution is to move your photos and movies over to your computer and its beefed-up storage capacity. (A 4 TB drive backed up by another 4 TB drive was suggested by my computer guru.) With your photos on your computer, you can easily use editing software and be impressed at how sharp the images are.

iPhone's great camera is blast to use. It is not a replacement for my DSLR. And iPhones still can't shoot distant wildlife. However, it seems to have much of what I otherwise photograph covered. It was intriguing to find out that some of the more expensive smart phone cameras do have telephoto and normal lenses.

My advice is to do some investigating about smart phone cameras and think about acquiring one. Possibly your phone already has an adequate camera. Learn all you can about how to use it and get out there and enjoy!





# PSA Report and News

By Kathrin Swoboda, PSA Representative

## PSA Nature Round 2 Selections

The following images were selected to represent VPS in the upcoming PSA Nature Interclub Competition:

"A Soft Pillow" by **Joan Axilbund**

"Cormorant--A Touch of Blue" by **Mary Rabadan**

"Osprey and Prey" by **Mary Rabadan**

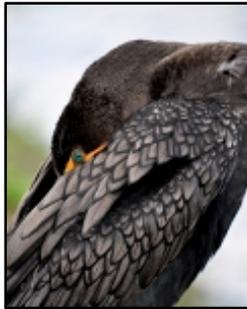
"Begging From Dad" by **Kathrin Swoboda**

"Eagle Grab" by **Kathrin Swoboda**

"A Thistle Seed Head After Flowering" by **Wayne Wolfersberger**

The slideshow may be viewed here: <https://www.vpsva.org/g/1331c52f-5606-4807-a065-ae11fc6f6afa>

The judges were advanced photographers Joan Axilbund, Lou Coglianese, and Kathleen Furey. The judges who had entered images into the competition were not able to judge their own images. The results will be available in about 4-6 weeks.



## New Opportunity for VPS Members: *George W. Glennie Memorial Nature Salon*

For the first time, the Vienna Photographic Society will participate in the "Glennies," a premier international nature competition only for camera clubs. This competition is known for its diversity with eight separate categories: landscapes, botany, birds, mammals, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and marine or freshwater life. PSA nature rules apply, meaning no human elements and images must appear natural with nothing added or removed from the scene except by cropping. Enter your best nature images at <https://www.vpsva.org/> from which ten entries, no more than two per photographer, will be chosen to represent VPS. The deadline is Feb. 11. (For background on the "Glennies," visit: <http://www.mvcameraclub.org/competitions/interclub/glennie/>)

# February to May Forums

By John Naman, VP, Forums



At every forum, we will try to have hands-on things to do/photograph and/or totally interactive such as critiques. The format is intended to be 30 minutes each for:

- 1) novice (cell phone)
- 2) intermediate (compact-4/3rds cameras)
- 3) advanced (full-frame cameras)

Always try to bring a camera!

## Schedule

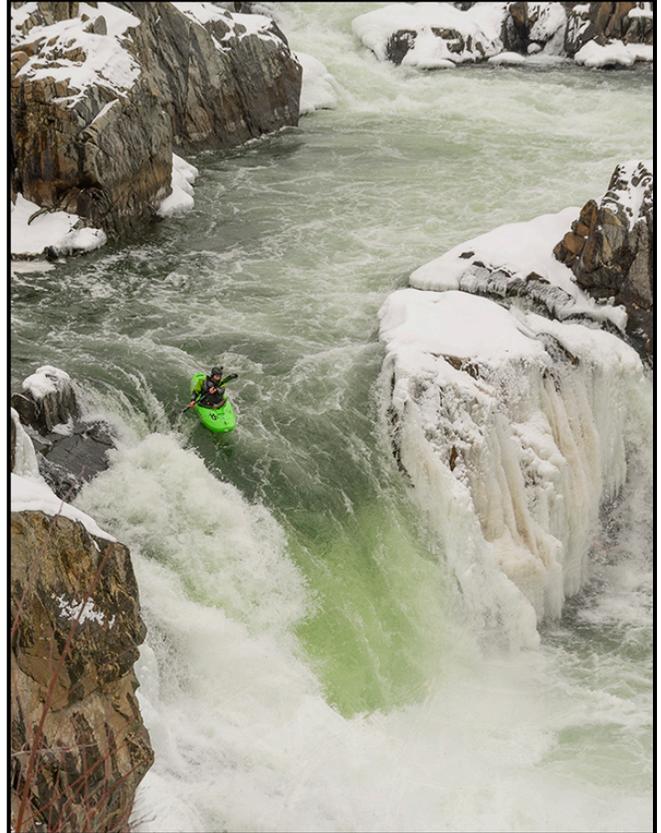
- 2/28 Flash; night photography (theme), paint with light, indoor, lighting, ISO  
3/28 Macro/close up & soil Life; focus, depth-of-field, and bokeh art techniques;  
Lightbox photography (if time) **Thoreau CLOSED, new location will be announced**  
4/25 Abstract photography and creative challenge (May digital art theme)  
5/23 Field Trip: sharing photos taken on VPS field trips and critique editing assignment  
5/30 Critique editing: results and discussion and make plans for next year

The May Forums are non-verbal critiquing of problematic images. Instead of saying, "You should crop here, do this, do that," the image will be online (soon) to fix up the way you think it should be. The fun comes when we get together and compare all the different ways we have to "fix" an image. This has been the most popular forum in past years. The problematic Images will be representative of monthly themes -- Abstracts, Black and White, Night Photography, Children & Animals in Motion , Photojournalism , Town of Vienna, Flowers -- so that we all have a chance to keep up our skills. Expensive software is NOT required. I will gather a list of web links to free software, some just apps on a phone, to let us do crop, straighten, lighten, darken, change color saturation, delete certain people from family wedding, etc. The basics.

# Member News

**Wayne Wolfersberger's** captures of kayakers at (uncommonly) frozen Great Falls last month was featured in the Washington Post and on the Weather Channel. TWC also interviewed him live on air. His video is posted online here:

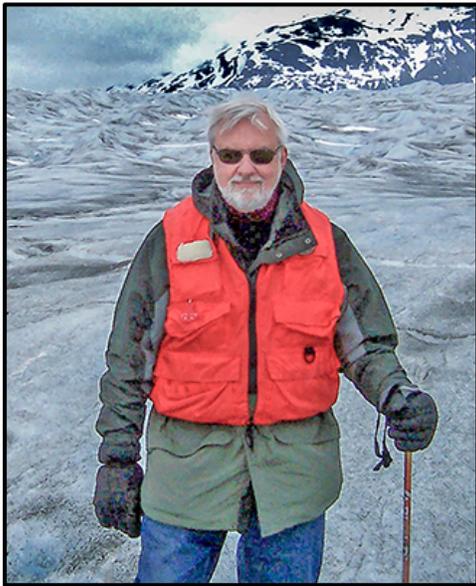
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/capital-weather-gang/wp/2015/02/27/polar-plunge-kayakers-brave-ice-coated-great-falls-after-snow-storm-photos-video/>



**Patricia Deege** had three images juried into an exhibit of painting and photographs at Green Spring Gardens. (4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria, 703-642-5173). The exhibit closes Feb. 26.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/events>





**David Heagy** is speaking about Iceland at the Northern Virginia Photographic Society on Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m. The club meets at the Dunn Loring Fire Station, 2148 Gallows Rd., Dunn Loring, VA. (<http://nvps.org/>)

David's father helped him buy a Rolleiflex 2.8E Twin Lens Reflex camera while he was in high school. (He still has it.) His dad showed him how to take basic pictures, develop, and print photographs.

He learned the technical side of photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology but he never had any training in composition. Typical class assignments were to make instant processing chemicals, figure out how to develop film on the moon, take an eight-hour exposure, and use photography and a record turntable to make a copper circuit board.

In the Marine Corps, David worked in a combat photography center at Camp Lejeune, NC. For 41 years he worked with a team to design, build, and operate satellite imaging systems. This included being responsible for the image quality of national imaging and display systems.

David's favorite type of photography is shooting while traveling on a bike and hiking. This involves architecture, people, and landscapes.

His trip to Iceland was on the way to Slovakia and Hungary.



# Calendar/Opportunities

- **Feb. 1:** **A woman's place is in the kitchen?** Heck, no. It's on VPS's Board of Directors. Women -- *and men!* -- please consider volunteering for the VP or Secretary slot. For more info, please contact VPS President David Kepley (kepley DOT david AT gmail DOT com). To volunteer for VPS's 30th anniversary, contact David Heagy. (dheagy at gmail dot com)
- **Feb. 3:** **Meet an Eastern Screech Owl and a Kestrel**, Patuxent National Wildlife Visitor Center, 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop Laurel, MD. For details, call 301-497-5887 or visit: [https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Region\\_5/NWRS/South\\_Zone/Patuxent\\_Research\\_Refuge/Feb\\_2018.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Region_5/NWRS/South_Zone/Patuxent_Research_Refuge/Feb_2018.pdf)
- **Feb. 11:** **Deadline** for George W. Glennie Memorial Nature Salon. See Page 24 above.
- **Feb. 20:** **Hocking Hills, OH photo workshop.** Click here for details: <http://jimmacormac.blogspot.com/2017/12/hocking-hills-photo-workshop-february.html>
- **Feb. 23:** **Deadline** for 8th Annual Joseph Miller Abstract Photography Exhibit competition. For details, visit: <http://nvacc.org/home/abstract-exhibit/>
- **Feb. 23:** **Raptors Reign**, Patuxent National Wildlife Visitor Center, 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop Laurel, MD. For details, call 301-497-5887 or visit: [https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Region\\_5/NWRS/South\\_Zone/Patuxent\\_Research\\_Refuge/Feb\\_2018.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/Region_5/NWRS/South_Zone/Patuxent_Research_Refuge/Feb_2018.pdf)
- **Feb. 26:** **Green Spring Gardens exhibit closes.** VPS Member Patricia Deege had three images juried into the exhibit of painting and photographs . (4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria, 703-642-5173, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/events>)
- **May:** **USGS Exhibit.** VPS has an opportunity to stage an exhibit of work by club members at the Reston headquarters of the U.S. Geological Survey. This federal agency offers an excellent venue with good lighting and space for at least 60 images. The number of entries per person will be determined upon the interest expressed by members. If you want to participate, contact Patricia Deege at pdeege AT Verizon DOT net or 703-255-1426. VPS is responsible for hanging the exhibit so help will be needed to set it up and take it down. USGS has requested that subject matter be the natural world or geology. Hand of man is okay, but nature subjects are more suitable than portraits, architecture, & city photos.
- **2018** **Nature's Best Photography magazine's Windland competition.** Details: [https://www.naturesbestphotography.com/enter\\_guidelines.php](https://www.naturesbestphotography.com/enter_guidelines.php)  
The 2017 winners are exhibited at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History through September, 2018 [https://www.naturesbestphotography.com/smithsonian\\_exhibitinfo.php](https://www.naturesbestphotography.com/smithsonian_exhibitinfo.php)

**CORRECTION:** January's "Focal Points" published the wrong photo and website address for Alan Goldstein, VPS's Jan. 3 speaker. We regret the error.

# Call For Entries

## VPS Nature Exhibit in May at U.S. Geological Survey



The Vienna Photographic Society has been invited to stage an exhibit of members' photographs in the long gallery at the United States Geological Survey. This is an excellent venue, with good lighting, and many employees and visitors to view the exhibit. The number of images per person accepted will depend upon the show of interest among members, most likely two or three and perhaps more. It is hoped that we will have a good number sharing their work.

**Subject matter should be of the natural world**, i.e. fauna, flora, geology, or landscapes; portraits, architecture or abstract work is not very suitable for this venue. Hand of man is optional but should not be the main interest. The venue is large, so a minimum of 11 x 14 for the framed size is requested. Frames should be ready to hang, with screw eyes and wire. Clip frames are not very secure and have been known to come apart and fall. The final presentation of each entry will be examined. All photographs under glass should be matted. Photographs on canvas are very acceptable. Digital alterations are optional, at the discretion of the author.

**Please fill out the attached entry form** with your details as soon as possible, suggested deadline March 17. This will indicate the show of interest and enable us to determine the number of entries we can accept from each member. If you cannot at this time provide titles of your intended entries, please enter TBD on the line for the title.

**Help will be required to hang this exhibit**, and someone is needed to be responsible for the take down at the end of May and make sure that all images have been picked up from USGS. Patricia Deege will be coordinating the exhibit, but will be out of town at the end May so unable to supervise the take down.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will participate in this endeavor. It is an excellent opportunity to share your work with the public and possibly sell something.

**Please direct questions to Patricia Deege (pdeege@verizon.net, 703-255-1426)**

**CALL FOR ENTRIES  
VPS EXHIBIT AT USGS, MAY, 2018**

Open to all VPS members. Suggested **deadline for receipt of this form is March 17, 2018.** This will indicate a show of interest and allow determination of the number of entries per person to be accepted. If you cannot at this time provide the titles of your prospective images they can be submitted at a later date. Please indicate TBD in the title line. Help will be needed to install and take down this exhibit, especially at the end of May. Patricia Deege is coordinating this exhibit but will not be available to supervise take down. Please indicate your availability and willingness to assist with this.

Please fill out the form below with your information and return it to Patricia Deege at [pdeege@verizon.net](mailto:pdeege@verizon.net). Or by mail: 9828 Vale Road, Vienna, VA 22181

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list titles in order of preference; in the event that there is not space for all of them, they will be accepted in the order of preference indicated.

-----  
Title 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_ (or NFS)

Title 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_ (or NFS)

Title 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_ (or NFS)

Title 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_ (or NFS)

I can assist with: Hanging the exhibit: \_\_\_\_\_  
Taking down at end of May: \_\_\_\_\_ (exact date to be decided)  
Supervising take down: \_\_\_\_\_ (essential)

Direct any questions to: Patricia Deege. [pdeege@verizon.net](mailto:pdeege@verizon.net), 703-255-1426

# VPS Board Members



President	David Kepley
First VP	<i>vacant</i>
Secretary	<i>vacant</i>
Treasurer	Venkat Krishnan
VP, Speakers	Julie Cochran
VP, Judges	John Padbury
VP, Competitions	Janet Gelb
Digital Projection	Lilly Heagy and Lori Saunders
VP, Member Communications	Gloria Spellman
Director, PSA	Kathrin Swoboda
Director, Focal Points	Barbara Saffir
Director, Publicity	David Heagy
Director, Membership	Paige Counts
Director, Website	Gloria Spellman
VP, Forums	John Naman
VP, Field Trips	Lori Saunders
VP, Operations	George Silvas
Director, Social Events	Carol Carroll
Exhibits	<i>vacant</i>
Gift Cards/50/50 Raffle	Julie Cochran
Nature Visions Representative	Bill Mugg

*(To contact the club and/or to volunteer for open positions, please email [webmaster@vpsva.org](mailto:webmaster@vpsva.org))*

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## February - May Competition Themes

<b>Feb. 21</b>	Black & White Winter Digital Art	<b>Apr. 18</b>	Things that Fly Photojournalism
<b>Mar. 21</b>	Night Photography Animals in Motion	<b>May 16</b>	Town of Vienna Flowers Digital Art

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## "Focal Points" Newsletter

is published monthly except for a combined July/August issue. Please email member news, story ideas, stories, and medium-res photos to Editor Barbara J. Saffir (Barb22030 AT yahoo DOT com).

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# VPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

JULY, 2017 through JUNE, 2018

Mail this application and your check (payable to VPS) or cash to:  
VPS, c/o Paige Counts, 10315 Dunfries Rd., Vienna, VA 22181  
or hand the payment and application form during any VPS meeting to  
Paige Counts, Membership Director, or Burgess Levin, Treasurer

I am ( ) a NEW member OR ( ) RENEWING. I have been a VPS member since the year (\_\_\_\_\_)

First Name\* \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_ Last Name\* \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City-State-Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email\* \_\_\_\_\_ \*=required

NOTE: To receive VPS's Newsletter (*Focal Points*) and other membership messages, you must provide a unique and valid email address. *Focal Points* is emailed to members and posted on the club's website as a PDF file. You need Adobe Acrobat Reader to open it.

PRIVACY: Membership records are maintained by the Membership Director. Periodically, the records are distributed to members to manage VPS's business. Membership records may also be shared with the Nature Visions Photo Expo as part of VPS's participation in that event. Membership records are also available on the VPS website to club members only. VPS will not provide member information to persons or to organizations outside the club, other than specified above. Members may opt to restrict the display of their membership records to other members as follows. Please check one of the options below. This will govern how your records may be displayed to other members on the VPS website:

INCLUDE \_\_\_ my name, phone number, home and email address. (This is the default option.)

INCLUDE \_\_\_ my name and email address.

INCLUDE \_\_\_ only my name.

I have enclosed my check.

( ) \$40 for a Single Membership

( ) \$60 for a Family Membership

## DUES PAYMENT

( ) \$20 for non-renewing members joining after January 31.

( ) \$30 for non-renewing Family Members\* joining after January 31

( ) cash for:

( ) \$15 for a Student Membership (age 18 or under)

\*Family members, please make separate application and use unique email address for each member.

## IMPORTANT: VPS Liability & Publicity Release

In consideration of being given the opportunity to participate in a Vienna Photographic Society (VPS) field trip or other event, I acknowledge, agree, and represent that I understand the nature of field trips and other VPS activities, and that I am qualified, in good health and in proper physical condition to participate in such field trips and activities. I fully understand that field trips and other VPS activities are conducted in different environments, and that, accordingly, my photography equipment and I may be exposed to dangers and hazards both natural and man-made. I fully accept and assume all risks and all responsibility for losses, costs, and damages I incur as a result of my participation in VPS field trips or other activities. I hereby release, discharge, and covenant not to sue VPS, its officers, directors, agents, independent contractors, volunteers, members and sponsors.

ADDITIONALLY, I authorize the use of any images submitted to VPS for use by VPS solely for publicity activities such as websites or brochures.

Acceptance of terms of VPS Liability Release (If under 18, parent or guardian must sign):

PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT VPS?

- A Friend     VPSVA.ORG     Meetup.com     Web Search     VPS Card/Brochure
- Photo Expo or Exhibit \_\_\_\_\_     Photo Class or Store \_\_\_\_\_
- Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_     Other \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPATION IN VPS SUPPORT NETWORK

VPS has established a support network of members who wish to contribute a few hours each month to assist in VPS program activities, including providing assistance to VPS officers. This network is mentored by the First Vice President of the Vienna Photographic Society.

Are you interested in being listed as a member of the VPS Support Network?  Yes  No

If yes, please indicate in what areas you might volunteer to help us (a VPS officer will follow up by email):

- WILLING TO HELP WHERE NEEDED
- PUBLICITY: Providing publicity and information to the community about VPS
- INSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT: Development of ideas for hands-on instructional programs like Forums
- FIELD TRIPS: Planning and arranging field trips
- AUDIO-VISUAL SUPPORT:  Helping set up projection equipment at meetings.
- Learn to operate the projection program for competitions.
- SPEAKER PROGRAM: Help with planning guest speaker visits
- GREETING: Greeting new members and guests
- HISTORIAN: Assist in preparing historical documents about VPS activities
- TABLE SETUP: Help with setup for monthly photographic competitions
- COMPETITION JUDGING: Help with selection and planning of judges activity in monthly competitions
- PRINT HANDLING: Assist in passing prints during monthly competitions
- NATURE VISIONS EXPO: Help VPS Rep with the annual regional Nature Visions Photo Expo, Nov 11th-13th
- EDITORIAL HELP: Help by assisting editor with editing/production of monthly newsletter
- ARTICLE DEVELOPMENT: Writing, soliciting or editing articles for monthly newsletter working with the Editor
- PHOTO DISPLAY: Help with planning and arranging member photo displays and external Exhibitions
- WEBMASTER ASSISTANCE: Help with assistance to VPS Webmaster
- PARTY ASSISTANCE: Help setting up parties and social events

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR USE BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

(Please print.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Contact David Kepley (*kepley.david AT gmail DOT com* or 703-978-2961)