

FOCAL POINTS

Vienna Photographic Society

MARCH, 2018

*FIRST ANNUAL BIRD
PHOTOGRAPHY ISSUE*

INSIDE:

Common or Cool?

Backyard Bluebirds

Free Bird Walks

**Pinpointing Birding
Hotspots**

**March 7 Bird Photo
Speaker**



MARCH, 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>



Common is Cool

By Barbara J. Saffir

OMG! Did you see it? Did you see that blazing-red bird with an orange beak, a black mask, and head feathers that flip up and down? I'd drive 100 miles to photograph a cool bird like that! But when *you* saw it, I'll bet you thought, Big deal! That's just a boring male northern cardinal. They're everywhere."



But to many folks around the globe who have never eyeballed Virginia's state bird, this ruby treasure is worthy of a magazine cover.

After traveling around the country last summer and discovering so many uber-cool birds that were just someone else's "boring backyard birds," I learned to appreciate our local critters more by looking at them like I'd never seen them before.

Take our dime-a-dozen mallards. Did you ever *really* look at these dabbling ducks? Their heads glow iridescent green. And some even sport blue or purple heads. How about an eastern bluebird? These red, white, and blue beauties are just begging for you to turn their images into award-winning photos.

Shoot your photographs now, because these creatures that you think aren't worth a second glance because they're so common are growing *less* common. As more and more tall trees topple around the DMV to make way for townhouses and highways, one day our common cardinals could become *rare*.

WELCOME to the first annual bird photography issue of Focal Points. You won't find a lot of instructions on what shutter speeds to use or lenses to buy -- that's available all over the Internet and from photographers who lead bird workshops -- but you will discover where to find birds in the DMV, how to identify them, and other handy tips to improve your photos. If you have any suggestions for the next birding issue, along with compliments or complaints, please email me at Barb22030 at Yahoo DOT com. **- Barbara J. Saffir**



COVER PHOTO
"Curious Cardinal"
By Barbara J. Saffir

Backyard Bluebird Photography

By Kathrin Swoboda

Eastern bluebirds are some of the most beautiful birds in our area and they provide great entertainment. They are less timid than other birds, so they are very willing to pose for your camera. Practicing in your backyard will also translate to better images in the field.

To attract bluebirds, I recommend purchasing a nest box for eastern bluebirds. A raccoon baffle (get the longer one) is very helpful in preventing some predators but unfortunately not house sparrows.

Although I'm not a bluebird expert, I learned from experts to place the nest box facing away from the prevailing wind and over an open pesticide-free lawn. The bluebirds usually have three nestings each season. I have three boxes up in my yard so there is room for other species that



may compete with bluebirds. Place a perch in view of the box and they will often land on it and pose for you before flying to the box.

Check the box often and be watchful of timing. I do not open the box near the time of fledging as this action may cause a fledgling to exit prematurely. The quality of your photography will improve if you know when the bluebirds are actively feeding the chicks, since they will be very busy flying to and from the box, often landing on the perch to feed

their hungry brood as you photograph.

I photograph in the morning from an inexpensive pop-up blind by Ameristep with the sun behind and the perch in front. I locate the blind a good distance from the box so as not to stress the bluebird pair. I currently use a Nikon D500 with a 200-500mm zoom lens set on a tripod. A ballhead is useful to allow freer motion. A clean background (such as distant greenery) is an important consideration.



© Kathrin Swoboda

Nearly six years ago, I first started trying to attract more bluebirds to my backyard. I started photographing them after I noticed them waiting for me to put out mealworms for them every morning. You can place the mealworms in a small



feeder dish near the perch.

They prefer live mealworms for their chicks but will often take dried ones as well.

The bluebirds become accustomed to you and will quickly come to get the worms. They will be especially eager when they are feeding the babies in the box and less so for the week after they fledge.

If you want to install bluebird boxes, please consider joining the Virginia Bluebird Society

to learn all their recommendations for protecting the birds. A few recommendations follow. The society does *not* recommend installing bluebird nest boxes unless there is a definite plan and commitment by a specific person or organization to monitor the boxes during the nesting season, every year.

They recommend only using *approved* bluebird boxes, which require several safeguards, including a 1.5-inch entry hole, a grooved "swallow ladder" inside, and a snake guard outside. Specifically, they recommend an 8-inch or larger diameter stove pipe baffle, 24 inches high, mounted loosely (so it can swing) below the box, around the support pole. For that to work, the box must be on a stand-alone pole and not on a wall or fence post. It should be placed away from adjacent branches or shrubs so snakes cannot climb up them past the snake guard.

For details, visit

<http://www.virginiabluebirds.org/about-bluebirds/nest-boxes-guards-signs/>



© Kathrin Swoboda

The fledglings will actually return to the perch to be fed by their parent a week or two after fledging and it is great fun to capture the feeding behaviors. I photograph some afternoons without offering mealworms to get interesting pictures of the bluebirds with the various insects and berries they feed the nestlings.

Even if you do not photograph them, I highly recommend attracting bluebirds. You will gain a lot of pleasure observing these beautiful birds and supporting their survival.

KathrinSwobodaPhotography.com

BLUEBIRD CONSERVATION

"In the early 1900's the Eastern Bluebird was one of Virginia's most common songbirds. Human activities and several harsh winters resulted in a severe decline of the bluebird population. Thanks to conservation efforts, such as establishing and maintaining BB trails, the bluebird is making a strong comeback. However, the continuing loss of natural nesting sites and other problems faced by bluebirds indicate that this beloved bird may always need help to survive."

- *The Virginia Bluebird Society*



© Kathrin Swoboda

Free Bird Walks

Here are some free bird walks around the DMV. Check the web sites below to confirm the current schedules and ask each leader about her/his group's proper photography etiquette.



VIRGINIA

- Audubon Society of Northern Virginia** (Multiple walks and events)
<http://audubonva.org/birdwalks-and-field-trips/>
- Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve** (2nd Saturdays, 8 am)
<https://bansheereeksnp.org/>
- Blue Ridge Center** (Some Saturdays, 8 am)
<http://www.blueridgecenter.org/>
- Friends of Dyke Marsh** (Sundays, 8 am)
<https://www.fodm.org/>
- Friends of Huntley Meadows Park** (Mondays, 7 am [Nov.-March: 8 am])
<http://www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org/>
- Great Falls Park** (Sundays, 8 am)
<http://audubonva.org/birdwalks-and-field-trips/>
- Loudoun County Wildlife Conservancy** (Multiple walks and events)
<https://loudounwildlife.org/programs-and-field-trips/>
- Merrimac Farm** (Last Sunday of the month, 8 am)
<http://www.pwconserve.org/events/index.html>
- Northern Virginia Bird Club** (Multiple walks and events)
<http://nvabc.org/>



WASHINGTON, DC

- DC Audubon Society** (Monthly, various locations)
<https://audubondc.org/fieldtrips/>

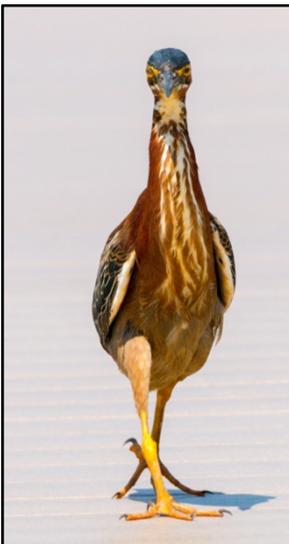


MARYLAND

- Audubon Naturalist Society** (Multiple walks and events)
<https://anshome.org/>
- Maryland Ornithological Society** (Member Clubs host hundreds of walks)
<http://www.mdbirds.org/>
- Patterson Park Audubon Center (Baltimore)** (Last Saturday of the month, 8 am)
<http://pattersonpark.audubon.org/programs/bird-walks>

Finding and Identifying Birds

These are some of the best apps and web sites to identify birds and to pinpoint where they congregate. Be sure to read the privacy policies of each site before you use it. - bjs



WEB SITES:

All About Birds (Cornell Lab of Ornithology)
<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>

Audubon
<http://www.audubon.org/birding/identifying-birds>

Virginia Birding & Wildlife Trail
<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/>

PHONE APPS:

iBird Explorer (Mitch Waite)
<http://ibird.com/>

Merlin Bird ID (It can ID a photo of a bird on your phone)
<http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Sibley eGuide to Birds
<http://www.sibleyguide.com>

LOCATING BIRDS IN REAL TIME:

eBird (App and web site. Search by bird, region, hotspot, etc. Can report sightings, too.)
<https://ebird.org/>

Virginia Birding News
<http://birding.aba.org/maillist/VA01>

Maryland and DC Birding
<http://www.mdbirding.com>

Bird Radar
http://www.pauljhurtado.com/US_Composite_Radar/

Don't Photograph Birds Without Reading This!

Bird Photography Ethics

By Barbara J. Saffir

Ethics:

"Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity." We know it well. Just think about the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Bird Photography Ethics:

Sometimes it feels like it's not so black and white but Audubon says it basically boils down to this: "The most important rule of bird photography" is "do no harm."

And, even though Audubon doesn't address this, as photographers we must act responsibly and courteously with our fellow birders and wildlife photographers -- and we cannot break laws.

So never endanger a bird, especially when it's nesting, seeking food to survive, or in the midst of migrating hundreds or thousands of miles. **No photo is ever worth killing or hurting a bird.**

These are some of Audubon's policies and links to other associations' codes of ethics.

(1) *Carefully **watch the bird's behavior**. You will quickly learn to recognize signs of nervousness, and when you see those signs, you should slowly back off. A long lens will often get you that great shot without getting close to your subject.*

(2) ***Never flush birds** (that is, disturb them and make them fly)—either your subject or other birds near your subject. In breeding season, it can interfere with reproduction. In winter, it can cause birds to use up precious internal resources.*

(3) *Be aware of habitat, and **avoid trampling sensitive ground cover or breaking branches**. Sometimes damage to habitat can do more long-term harm than disturbance of the birds themselves.*

(4) ***Be particularly careful when photographing nests**. Be sure not to keep the parents away from the nest during incubation or when they're feeding their chicks. A bird's greatest defense against nest predation is camouflage, so never remove anything near the nest in an effort to get a better shot.*

(5) *Pay attention to rules about **keeping your distance**. If, for instance, a sign says to stay back 200 feet from a rookery, stay back 200 feet. Regulations like that are not arbitrary; they were written for a reason.*

National Audubon Society:

<http://www.audubon.org/photography/ethics>

American Birding Association:

<http://listing.aba.org/ethics/>

Virginia Society of Ornithology:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/572d119340261d2ef97ef526/t/5740ea3df8baf3f38df38bb0/1463872061520/VSO_P_B_Ethcs_042009.pdf

North American Nature Photography Association:

<http://www.nanpa.org/advocacy/ethics/>

Winning Birds

By Gwen Bowden

The Delmarva Peninsula is known for the birds that live and visit there all year around, but in winter they get many snow geese and swans. I've always loved seeing them, usually in farmers' fields and I often tried to get a great photo. In February 2017 while visiting family on the Eastern Shore, my



husband and I went to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, near Cambridge, MD, to see what kind of birds might be around. We had found a spot with what seemed like thousands of snow geese sitting on the water. We had pulled over and climbed into the back of our F150 pickup to get a better view. Just sitting there the birds were very loud with their honking. Suddenly another bird spooked them and they took flight. It was the kind of moment that takes your breath away. I started clicking, hoping for a great shot. It was so much fun and I think that photography should be fun.

I still smile when I think about that day. I am always looking for photo contests and when I saw one in the Washington Post Travel section I entered one of the snow geese photos hoping someone else would enjoy I as much as I did. Well I guess it did because it made the paper. In August 2017 I received a call from the Travel Photo Contest editor telling me my picture had made the finals. I spoke to her and gave her a few details of the moment. I was still not sure my photo would be published but later when I opened the paper and saw a half page picture, it brought tears to my eyes. It's nice to know that someone would enjoy it as much as I did. There were over 1,400 entries so it was quite an honor. I hope it will help people realize that you can have a great photo experience anyplace.

March 7 Speaker: Jeff Johnson

Bird Photography

Thoreau Middle School, 7:30 p.m.

The 70's - Kodak 126 focusing on family photos.

The 80's - "Stole" an Air Force buddy's Minolta X-300, focused on candid and street photography. Upgraded to my first SLR while stationed in England, never put it down. Had it with me so much, it was rumored that I was CID.

Then a 20-year break. Life and work got in the way.

For the last 10 years, I have been shooting avidly: many different subjects; landscapes, urban decade, macro.

Four years ago, I became the President of Loudoun County Photo Club. I earned the title of LPC Photographer of the Year twice, was awarded Photo of the Year by the members in 2016. Most recently I have been a Tour and Meet-up Assistant with Road Runner Photography Tours.

Over the last few years passion, avian photography has been my muse, adding peacefulness to my graying years.



My Fav Photo

By Patricia Deege

It was early morning in South Carolina and mist was rising over the Ashley River. The water was sluggish, due to little recent rain, and there were quiet pools near the bank. I noticed this snowy egret standing motionless on a tiny hillock of mud, staring at the water, his image beautifully reflected in the still pool. I approached cautiously, taking a few shots as I came nearer. Finally, since he seemed undisturbed, I set up the tripod and created this image of a perfect reflection, with a tiny ripple of water surrounding the bird's beak, the only indication that this was indeed water. The remainder of the image is wonderfully simple with only the cloud reflections filling the space. This has long been one of my most favorite images.



My Fav Photo

By Gloria Spellman

This photo of a grackle is one of my favorites. I have seen many of them and they always appeared to be black birds. In this photo I really liked the detail and pop of color in his feathers that were revealed due to the angle of light. This was the first time I realized that this bird had blue tints in its feathers! It is also one of my favorites because I took this shot hand-held in the backseat of a slow-moving car!



My Fav Photo

By John Sichenze

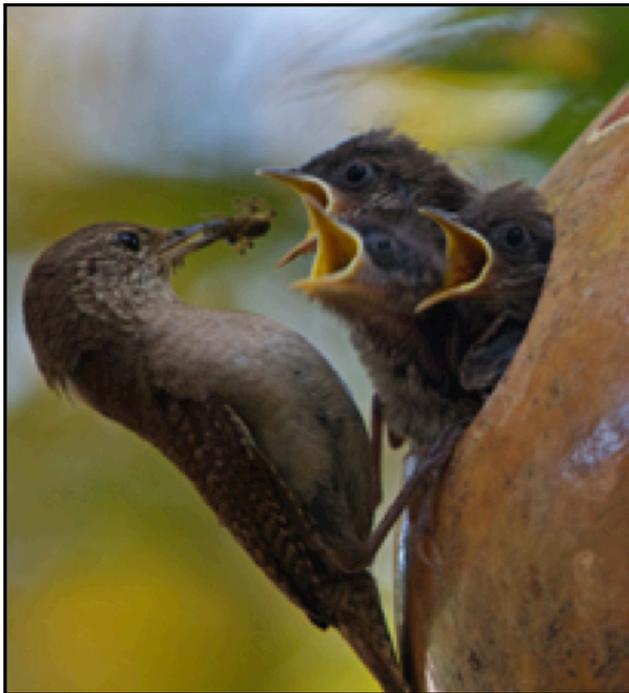
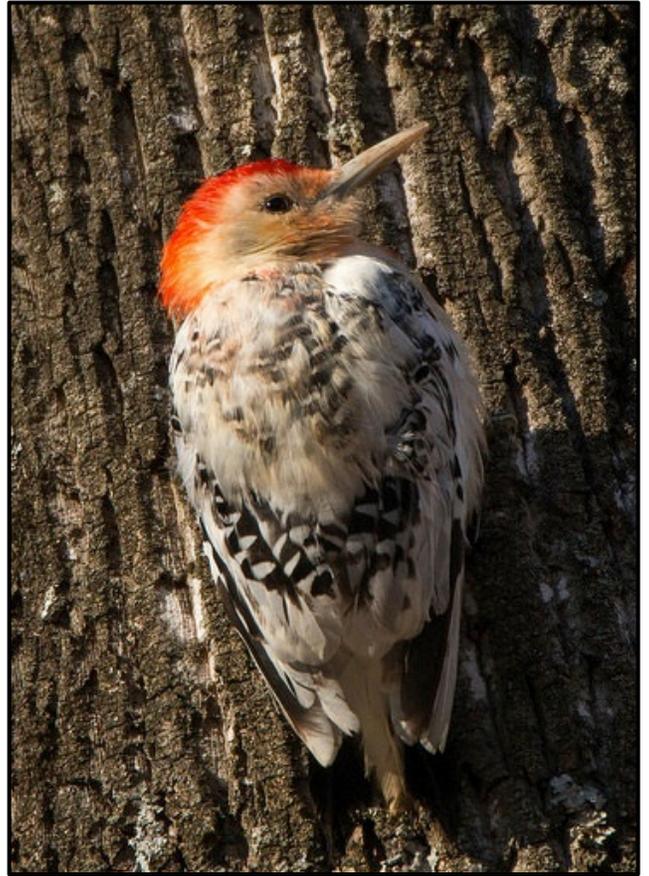
This is one of the first photos I took with my first digital camera -- a Nikon Coolpix 5000. That's how old it is. I have been trying to duplicate it without success with my d70, d80, d90 and d600. It was taken at Jones Beach on Long Island, NY.



My Fav Photo

By Barbara J. Saffir

I shot this **male leucistic red-bellied woodpecker** last month at Carderock Recreation Area by the C&O Canal. Normally it would have a dark bill and a lot less white on its back but it's leucistic, meaning it lacks *some* melanin pigment. Albinos lack *all* melanin pigment so they're completely white with pink eyes. Look around on your next photo hike and maybe you'll spy one. Over the past few years I've also been lucky enough to capture a leucistic robin, grebe, willet, junco, and swallow -- along with three leucistic or "piebald" deer and an albino squirrel! (An albino squirrel reportedly *still* lives on the National Mall near the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.) Check out my other leucistic photos here: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/olympusbjs/830atw>



My Fav Photo

By Joan Axilbund

Wren feeding famished triplets.

My Fav Photo

By Gina Clautice

Watching Princess "Natty" interact with squirrels is very entertaining.
The squirrels are very bold approaching her. Almost fearless!



SELECTIVE ADJUSTMENTS

PROCESSING TIPS

By Patricia Deege

I am a Photoshop user, since before the publication of Lightroom. For this reason, all the adjustments described here are done with Photoshop and Camera RAW, but many, if not all—with exception of using layers—are also available in Lightroom. I always photograph using the RAW format as it provides so much more valuable information for subsequent post processing.

Adjustments in Camera RAW

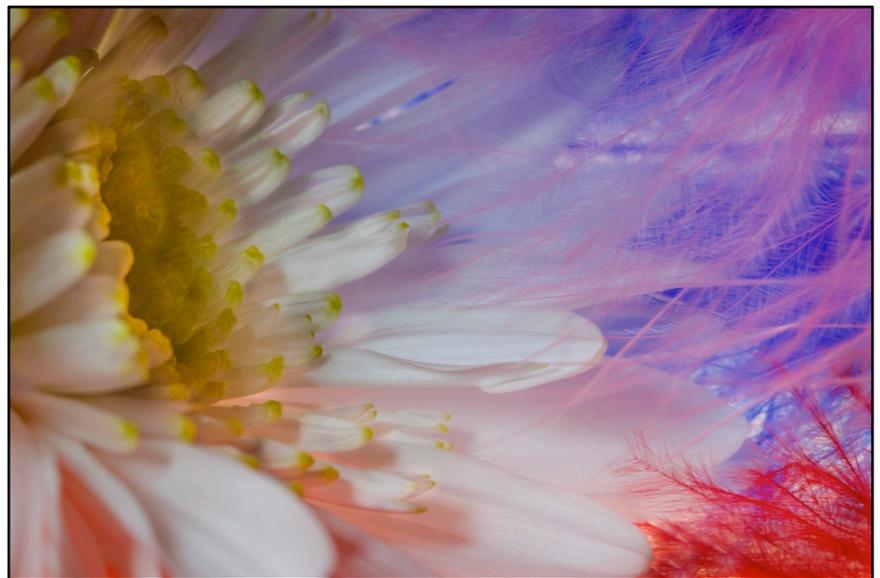
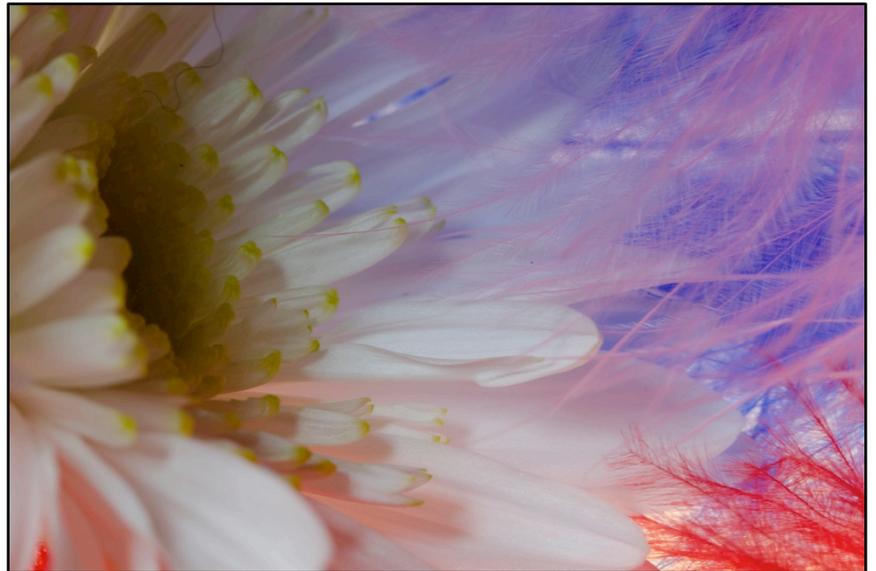
When opening an image in Adobe camera RAW, I first complete the overall changes using the sliders for exposure, shadows, highlights, and contrast.

Sometimes a small area may need to be further altered, so I go to the adjustment brush in the tool bar. Make sure the new box is checked, in exposure choose the minus (left side) or plus (right side) and, if necessary, change the amount of adjustment you may need (e.g. 0.50 to 0.30, etc.). Then simply paint on your image where it needs to be lightened or darkened. If you make a mistake, you can either clear and begin again, or erase where necessary to achieve the results you want. Other selective adjustments can be made in a similar manner, using the sliders and painting with the adjustment brush. You can make almost all the necessary changes like this using Camera RAW. If you photograph with the jpg format, you can still open it in Camera RAW from Photoshop, using the Open As and designating Camera RAW in the box lower right. You can then use all the same options, with the exception of White Balance, although you can alter the temperature sliders to get some changes to the exposure in your images.

In the images 1 and 2 shown, I have brightened the center of the flower on the left and added minor adjustments to other areas. The flower was sharpened while the rest of the image was left as shot.

Adjustments in Photoshop

I always work in layers, when making adjustments with Photoshop. That way, if you don't like what you have done it is easy to delete the layer and return to your original image. If it is only a few keystrokes, you can also delete the boxes in the history palette to go back to where you made an error.



Selective sharpening: If you have blurred your background by using a shallow depth of field, you probably will not want to now sharpen this area of your image. You can achieve the desirable result by either of the following two methods.

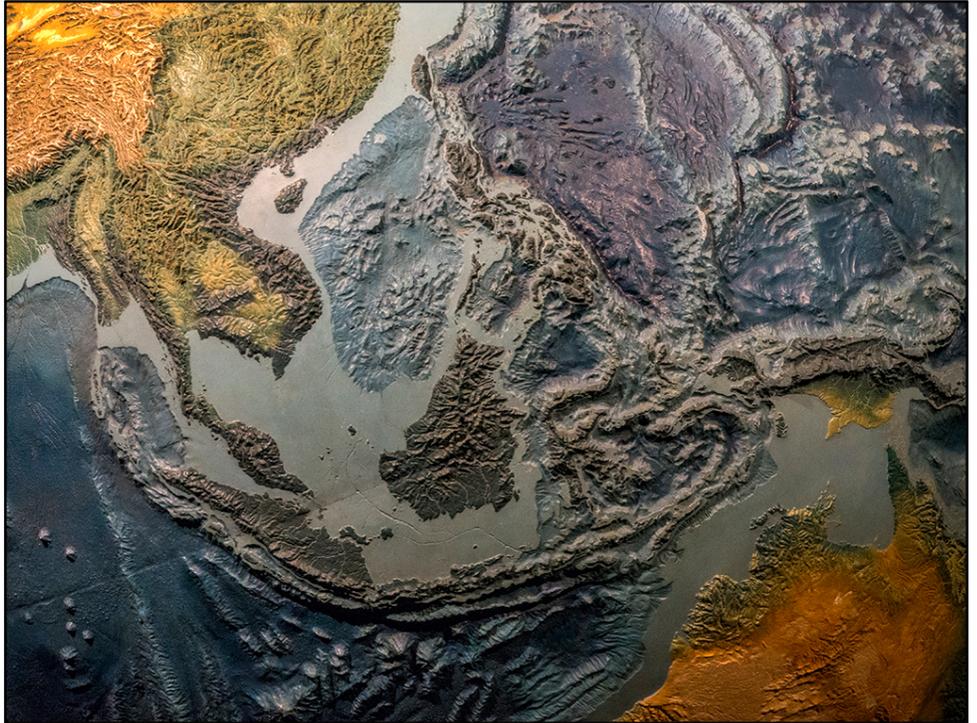
Method No. 1. Make a duplicate layer of your image and use the selection tools to select the areas in your image that you want to sharpen. It is suggested that perhaps you want to feather your selection so as to have a not-too-harsh result. For this go to select, feather and enter an amount that you think is necessary (2-3 pixels suggested). You can then use your sharpening tools, either from Photoshop or—if you have Topaz, the clarity slider. Sharpening will only show on the area you have selected. You can do the same to blur areas of your image so that the subject stands out more.

Method No. 2. On a new layer, sharpen your image so that the areas you want sharp look right. Then, go to layer in the tool bar and add a layer mask. If the area you want to keep sharp is large use the reveal-all mask. The mask will show white in the layers palette. Go to the brush tool, make sure the layer mask is highlighted and the foreground square at the bottom of the tools palette is black. Brush out where you don't want sharpening. When the area that you want to keep sharp is small, use the hide all element, the mask will show black and the foreground color of the bottom squares should be white. Paint in the change where sharpness is needed. You can vary the opacity of the brush tool in the top tool bar or vary the overall opacity of the layer itself.

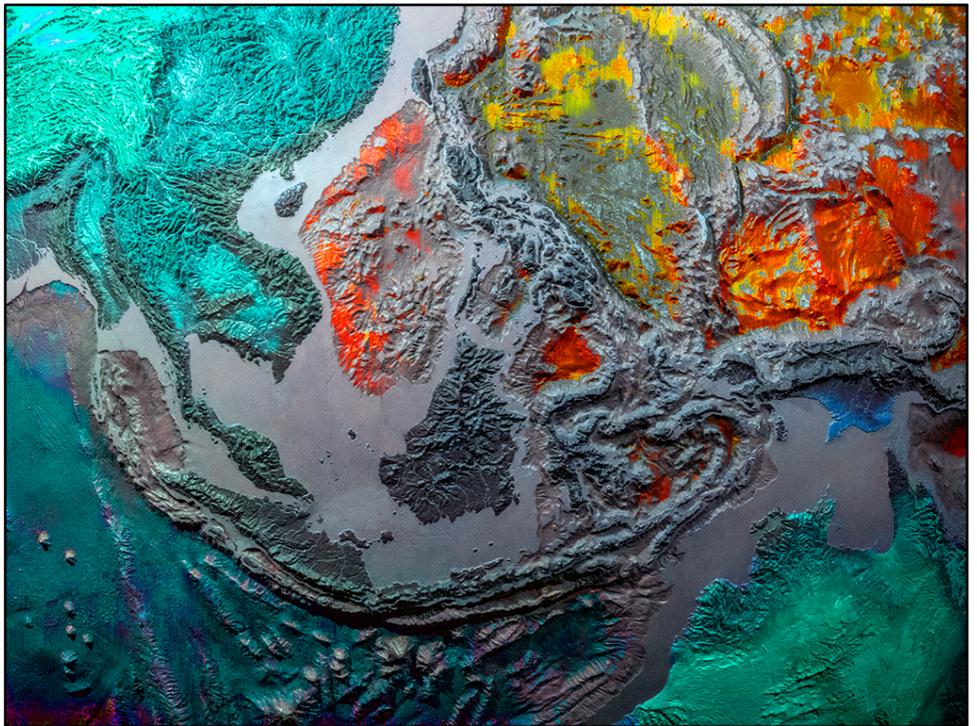
In images 3 and 4, method No. 2 was used to sharpen only the foreground figures. I blurred the entire layer, added a hide-all layer mask and brushed out the foreground figures to keep them sharp. I then selected the figures and added a small amount of extra sharpening to the figures only.



Selective adjustment or color change: Always create a duplicate layer. Using any of the selection tools, you can make either an exact selection of part of your image or a loose one that incorporates the areas that you want to change. Then go to image, adjustments, and choose the required element (e.g., exposure, levels, saturation, etc.). The changes you make will only show up in the area that you have selected.



In images 5 and 6, on a duplicate layer, small areas of the image were selected; I then went to image, adjust, hue and saturation and played with the sliders to achieve the colors I liked. This was repeated making different selections and changing the colors to taste. You can vary the opacity of the layer by changing the value of the opacity slider in the layers palette.



If you are using Photoshop, you should always make your changes on a new layer, so that it is very easy to delete the layer if necessary and return to your original image.

March 21 Competition

Judge: Brian J. Zwit

Thoreau Middle School, 7:30 p.m.

Over 40 years ago, Brian discovered that photography provided a powerful means for expressing his vision of the world. Over the years, his love of the outdoors and photography as well as an aptitude for computer technology have morphed into a passion (some would say obsession) for capturing the elegance and majesty of the unique landscapes, wildlife, and flora of the United States. While the pursuit of nature takes him all over the country, he favors the west, northwest, northeast, and mid-Atlantic and, wherever he is, his love of hiking and backpacking takes him far beyond populated areas into settings which few people visit.

Brian's images are in private residences and corporate offices and have appeared in regional magazines such as Wonderful West Virginia. Corporate clients have also used his images for promotional and internal publications.

Brian has been teaching workshops, field trips, and classes and speaking to camera clubs, schools, and other non-profits as well as for profit entities for over ten years. He recently reached a milestone: He taught Lightroom to his 500th student. Brian is well-known for his ability to distill complex topics to their essence and explain them in simple, easy to understand ways and is a recognized expert in digital workflow with Lightroom, Photoshop, Nik software, and other editing applications. He generally uses Nikon cameras, Nikon and Sigma lenses, Induro tripods and ballheads, and a variety of accessories.

Brian has a degree from Purdue University in chemical engineering, the University of Houston Law Center in law, and Northern Virginia Community College in photography. In addition, he has taught himself HTML, PHP, JavaScript, and other computer technologies.

His favorite assistant is Dingo, his Parson Russell Terrier, who really is not very helpful but is always ready for a walk in the woods.



***THEMES:
Night Photography and
Animals in Motion***

Feb. 21 Competition Results

Judge Jim Steele

Monthly Theme - Black and White (35 entries)

Lori Saunders
Paige Counts
John Padbury

ESP StarLight
Egret in the Everglades
Silos

1st
2nd
3rd



Mort Friedman
Kathleen Furey
Gary Perlow
Gary Perlow
Bill Mugg

Montana storm
Lotus Flower
Tribune Tower
Six Bridges
Big Mama

HM
HM
HM
HM
HM



Monthly Theme - Winter (Digital Art) (16 entries)

Bill Mugg
David Heagy
Mort Friedman
Barbara Saffir

Big Bear Winter
Lonely branch in snow
Icicle dancer
This is MY ice!

1st
2nd
3rd
HM



Open Digital (31 entries: 9 novice, 22 advanced)

NOVICE

Marco Sainati
Gary Perlow
Barbara Saffir

Espadrilles
Night Alley
Bee gone!!

1st
2nd
3rd



ADVANCED

Paige Counts
Patricia Deege
Lisette Brisebois
George Silvas
David Heagy
Lori Saunders

Skimmers Leaving Beach
SC Plantation Driveway.
Monarch Butterfly
The Bird is the Word
Iceland gear in sand
Spools

1st
2nd
3rd
HM
HM
HM



Open Prints (10 entries)

John Padbury
David Kepley
Kathleen Furey

Along C&O Towpath
Sunbeams
After the Rain

1st
2nd
3rd



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

February Field Trip Report:

Abstract/Macro Studio

Photos By Patricia Deege. Text By Lori Saunders, VP, Field Trips & John Naman, VP, Forums

VPS members visited a local photography studio to shoot inside on a very cold and rainy day. We broke up into four sessions of two hours each. We were joined by **Andrew Wone, Carol Carroll, David Heagy, John Nye, Julie Cochran, Lisette Brisebois, Marge Lynum, Mary Rabadan, Nicol Hockett, Patricia Deege, Robert Kelberg, and Venkat Krishnan.**

Everyone explored different ways of creating and photographing abstracts and macro/close-up images. For the abstracts sessions, there were four "stations" with lighting from behind (shoot through), underneath, in front, and one ultraviolet-lit setup lit from behind, above, and two sides.

Everyone found their own unique way of creating amazing abstracts. For the two macro/close-up sessions, there were multiple areas with great lighting and many different items from which to create macro images. For those new to shooting close-up, it was a very useful learning experience and for others, an opportunity to take their close-ups to a new level.

Patricia reviewed it as "a very interesting and rewarding experience, both from the point of view of opportunity to photograph in a controlled setting and also from the general fun experience that we had."



***Additional photos are posted on
VPS's Flickr and Facebook pages.***

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/vienna-photographic/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/107509176593979/>

February Field Trip Report:

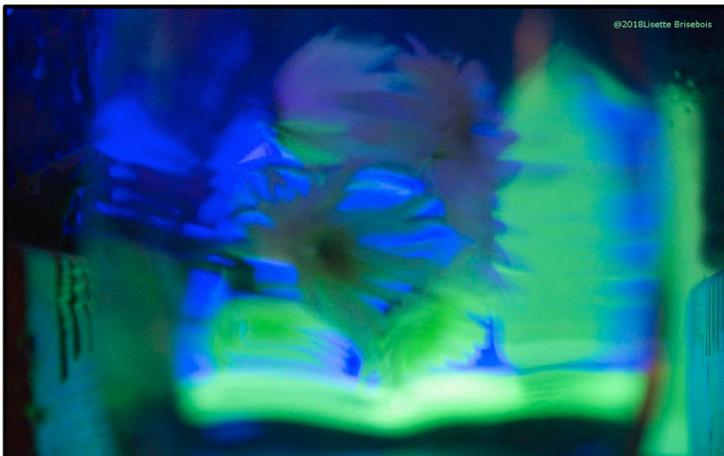
John Naman's Magical Photo Wonder Shop

By Lisette Brisboise

John Naman recently hosted a workshop on abstract photography and another on macro photography at a local studio. You really had to see it to experience the full amazement of the photography and his generosity in sharing his gear to understand that this is not an opportunity to be missed.

Before the people taking the workshops arrived, John had set up different stations with different photo ops. While John has Nikon cameras and lenses, much of his equipment is usable with any camera system. He set up floor to ceiling poles with lights attached as well as a multitude of other lighting options. There was a lightbox made from a milk crate. There were neatly organized props galore. I had a great time testing lenses. Say the word and whatever your photographic heart requires will magically appear. John's expertise is generously shared and is the cherry on the top.

No matter how frequently you visit John Naman's Photographic Wonder Shop, you will find yourself going home with new knowledge that you can use. Check out some of the photographs I have taken and ones others have shared. A picture says a thousand words. Thank you, John!



March 17 Field Trip:

Huntley Meadows Park

By Lori Saunders, VP, Field Trips

The **March 17** field trip will be to **Huntley Meadows Park**, the largest park in Fairfax County. We'll meet at **9 am in the large parking lot by the visitor center**. If you plan to arrive earlier (as bird photographers might want to do), you can still meet us there at 9. Just let me know your plans. There is no mandatory entrance fee, but this unique park requests donations.

Huntley Meadows is the largest wetlands in Northern Virginia. It features a visitor center, boardwalks, wildlife observation platforms, and more than 10 miles of maintained and informal trails. There are many observation areas and benches along the maintained Heron, Deer and Cedar trails. The park is home to abundant wildlife and is known for attracting many birds and amphibians that are less common in the region. It is surrounded by a forest sprinkled with several small, native-grass and wildflower meadows. On past trips I have seen beaver, snapping turtles, frogs, many types of birds, and dragonflies.

Please email me at loriasaunders@gmail.com with your cell phone number to RSVP. Bring water and a snack. The rain date is 3/18/18.



MUSKRAT, HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK, Barbara Saffir

HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK

3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, 703-768-2525

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows>

(Use the park's main address above for your GPS because the park has two entrances.)



PSA Report

By Kathrin Swoboda, PSA Representative

March 25 Deadline:

You can help VPS: Photograph nature and tell a story with your images. The next (and final) **deadline for the PSA nature contest is March 25.** Enter at <https://www.vpsva.org>. Contact me with any questions at kswoboda2421 AT gmail DOT com.

PSA Interclub Competition Results

PSA Open (Projected Image Division) Round 2 was judged at Schaumburg Area Photographic Society in Schaumburg, IL. Congratulations to **Joan Axilbund** for receiving an award of merit for "Egret Preening." Her image is posted on PSA's website here:

<https://psa-photo.org/index.php?2017-18-nd-interclub-round-two>.

(VPS is in Group D.) VPS is currently in 16th place out of 28 clubs.

See more details on VPS's homepage (<https://www.vpsva.org>) under "PSA News."



PSA Nature Round 2 was judged at the Keswick Photographic Society in Keswick, England. Congratulations to **Mary Rabadan** and **Kathrin Swoboda** for winning honorable mentions for "Osprey and Prey" and "Begging from Dad," respectively.

Kathrin also received an award of merit for "Eagle Grab," which is posted on the PSA website here:

<https://psa-photo.org/index.php?2017-18-nd-interclub-round-two>.

VPS finished 5th and is in 8th place overall out of 39 clubs.

See more details on VPS's homepage (<https://www.vpsva.org>) under "PSA News."



HOW TO JOIN PSA AS AN INDIVIDUAL:

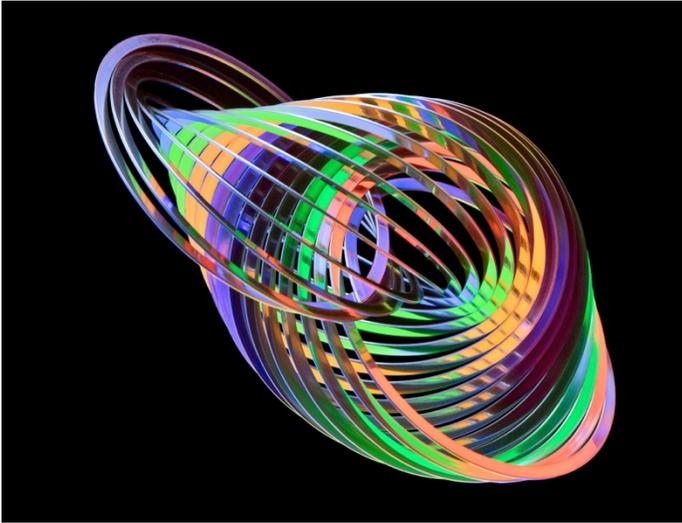
<https://psa-photo.org/index.php?thinking-about-membership>

ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Sept. 30-Oct. 6, 2018
Salt Lake City, UT



April 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:

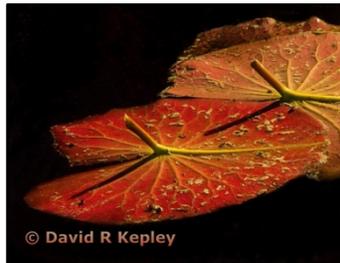
- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| April 25 | Abstract photography and creative challenge (May digital art theme) |
| May 23 | Field Trip: sharing photos taken on VPS field trips and critique editing assignment |
| May 30 | Critique editing: results and discussion and make plans for next year |

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 and Animals in Motion, Photo-journalism , 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.

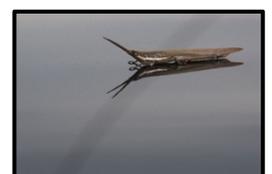
Member News

VPS members **Patricia Deege, Kathleen Furey, David Kepley, Bill Mugg, Mary Rabadan** and **Kathrin Swoboda** had images juried into the **George W. Glennie Memorial Nature Salon**, a premier, international all-nature club competition. VPS members entered 71 images that were judged by advanced VPS photographers Lou Coglianesi, Kathleen Furey, and Kathrin Swoboda. Judges who entered images could not judge their own images.

See <https://www.vpsva.org/g/5fe5cbc7-c1e3-4835-a87b-e1c9ccab73c7> for the online gallery. The judging will be held April 14 at the Greater Lynn Photographic Society in Boston, MA and the public is welcome to attend.

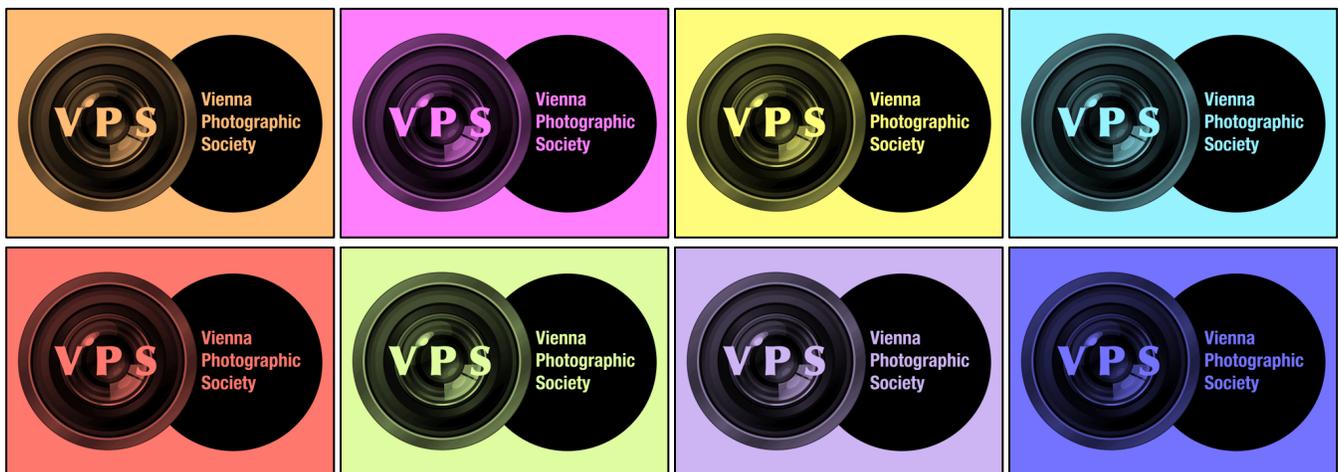


Barbara Saffir had three photos published in Virginia Wildlife Magazine's annual photography issue, published by Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. (Trillium at Thompson Wildlife Management Area, cattail toothpick grasshopper at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and a juvenile barn swallow at Huntley Meadows Park) To learn how to enter future contests yourself, please visit <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/virginia-wildlife/>



Calendar/Opportunities

- **March. 1:** **Volunteers needed for VPS's 30th anniversary.** For details, please contact David Heagy. (dheagy at gmail dot com)
- **March. 4:** **10-noon, free monthly Sunday morning Coffee and Critique** at Photoworks. Bring photos for informal feedback by a Photoworks faculty member or just attend to take part in a lively and thoughtful conversation about fresh work from fellow photographers. Coffee and bagels provided. It's a great way to get feedback on your work and meet others who are passionate about photography. And if you're new to Photoworks, Coffee and Critique is a great introduction.
(Future dates: 4/22, 5/20, 6/24, and 7/22. No August meeting.)
Contact: Karen Keating, photoworks.gallery AT gmail DOT com
<http://glenechophotoworks.org/2013/05/19/coffee-critique/>
- **March. 7:** **VPS speaker:** Bird Photography by Jeff Johnson
- **March. 7:** **VPS Competition photo upload begins**
- **March 15:** **USGS deadline.** (See following page.)
- **March. 17:** **VPS Field Trip to Huntley Meadows, 9 am**
- **March. 18:** **VPS Competition photo upload deadline is 11:30 pm**
- **March 21:** **VPS competition**
- **March 23:** **Focal Points** deadline. (Earlier submissions are preferred.)
- **March 25:** **PSA Nature #3 deadline**
- **May:** **USGS Exhibit**



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.

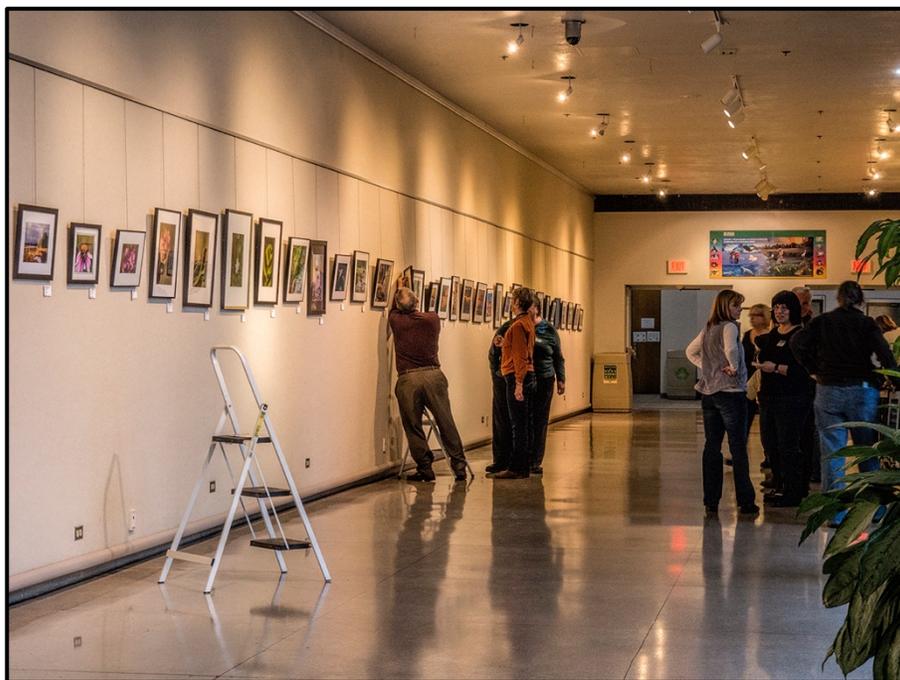
Subject matter should be of the natural world, i.e. fauna, flora, geology, or landscapes; portraits, architecture or abstract work is not very suitable for this venue. Hand of man is optional but should not be the main interest. The venue is large, so a minimum of 11 x 14 for the framed size is requested. 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 following 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 at verizon DOT 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. 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 , 703-255-1426

VPS Board Members



President	David Kepley
First VP	<i>vacant</i>
Secretary	<i>vacant</i>
Treasurers	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)

March to May Competition Themes

Mar. 21	Night Photography Animals in Motion	Apr. 18	Things that Fly Photojournalism	May 16	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).

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)