

FOCAL POINTS

Vienna Photographic Society

JUNE, 2017

INSIDE:

Savoring Summer

**Year-end Party
June 21**

Smartphone Lenses

Scott's Run Waterfall

Best PSA Results Ever

Chasing High Res



JUNE, 2017

IN THIS ISSUE:

Savoring Summer	2
Year-end Party	3
Cover Photo	3
Competition Results	4
PSA Report	5
June 7 Speaker	6
Field Trip Reports	7
Smartphone Lenses	9
Photo Excess	11
PSA Conference	13
Opps/Calendar	14
Vienna Calendar	16
New Themes	17
Board/Focal Points	18

VPS is a member of



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

VPS meets on the 1st, 3rd, & 4th Wednesdays, | September through June, at the Thoreau Middle School, Vienna, VA. Visitors are welcome. Please check VPS's calendar for details at <https://www.vpsva.org>



Savoring Summer

By Barbara J. Saffir



A picture makes a moment last a lifetime. So snap as many fun photos as you can to capture the oh-so-short-but-sweet summer of 2017. No need to try for an award winner with every shot. Just smile and snap. After you've taken gobs of photographs, create a photo book or at least an online photo album. If you haven't already, please join [VPS's Flickr group](#).

What *are* you doing this summer? Heading to the beach? The mountains? Abroad? Just hanging out in DC? Go play tourist like our millions of visitors. But while typical tourists just take ordinary photos, as locals we can spin more creative ways to capture the capital's legendary icons.

DC's monuments aren't your thing,? Just photograph what *you* love: your friends, your family, your home, your cats, your work, or the flora and fauna in your literal or metaphorical backyard.

If your true love is nature photography, make plans now. Meteorological summer began June 1 and the official summer solstice is June 21 at 12:24 am. Daylight starts to dwindle after that. The following books can help you plan the timing to best exploit the Mid-Atlantic's unique nature opportunities: Bryan Mackay's "*A Year Across Maryland*," Scott Weidensaul's "*Seasonal Guide to the Natural Year*," and Howard Youth's "*Field Guide to the Natural World of Washington DC*."

These books helped teach me what was worth photographing every month. Like the speckled fawns tucked beneath the low blueberry bushes at Shenandoah National Park's Big Meadows in early June while their moms forage for food. Or *when* those blueberries ripen -- which attracts *bears*! Giant pink lotuses peak in mid-July at DC's Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens and at Maryland's Lilypons Water Gardens. Pale yellow native lotuses flourish in late July. Exotic purple passion flowers and fields of sunflowers explode in July. And my personal favorite: critters who fly. Such as crayon-yellow Prothonotary Warblers and their babies at the Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge until August.

So hit the road and have fun. But don't forget to share your sweetest summer memories! (*And our Sept. 20 competition themes just happen to be "Nature" and "Summer."*)

End of Year Photo Party, Potluck and Awards

Wed., June 21, 6:30 p.m.

Prepare to Party!

*Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church, DeSales Hall,
8601 Wolftrap Rd., SE, Vienna*

\$10 collected at the door

RSVP to Carol (csquared02 AT yahoo.com)

Judge Brian Zwit (<http://www.brianjzwit.com/>) will choose the "best of the best" of our ribbon-winning photographs from the entire year. Delicious food and drink will be served to round out a delightful evening. Don't miss it!

Cover Photo by David R. Kepley

I took the cover photo image a year ago at Riverbend Park, which runs along the Potomac River just north of Virginia's Great Falls Park. My goal was to get some great pix of bluebells, but the breezes made it hard to get a clear shot of them. So I walked further down the trail to see if I could find a clump of bluebells that was protected from the wind. Instead I found these flowers just off the trail. The flower is called Squirrel Corn. The flowers grow along a small branch, somewhat like bleeding hearts, but instead of each blossom facing the same way, they come in pairs with each pair at right angles to the other pair. They grow about 6 inches off the ground. Each blossom is about half an inch long at most, about the size of the fingernail on your pinky. Best of all they were protected from the wind! Part of the trick was finding three blossoms that were sort of facing my camera. While I rendered them in B&W, they are a delicate off white with a touch of pink near the pointed end. I processed the image using Silver Effects Pro.



May 17 Competition Results

Judge: Matt Schmidt

Monthly Theme: Collections (17 Entries)

1st Place	Kathrin E. Swoboda	Perfume Bottles
2nd Place	Gloria Spellman	Porcelain Teacups
3rd Place	Janet Gelb	Button Burst
HM	Loma M Mier	Vintage Buttons
HM	Lori Saunders	Collection of Clockworks Orange



Monthly Theme: Spring (25 Entries)

1st Place	David R. Kopley	Squirrel Corn
2nd Place	Ceasar Sharper	Blossoms on the Basin BW
3rd Place	Bill Mugg	Spring Soldier
HM	Gloria Spellman	White Peony
HM	Mort H Friedman	Spring at 10,000 Feet
HM	Lisette Brisebois	Early Spring Crocus



Open Digital Novice (5 Entries)

1st Place	Mary Rabadan	Out on a Limb
------------------	---------------------	----------------------

Open Digital Advanced (17 Entries)

1st Place	Morton H. Friedman	Stairwell, after Escher
2nd Place	Lori Saunders	The Raspberry
3rd Place	Ceasar Sharper	Inside the Mask
HM	Dennis Tarnay	What am I
HM	John Padbury	Old Window



Open Prints: Combined Novice & Advanced (9 Entries)

1st Place	Kathleen Furey	Daisy Galaxy
2nd Place	Joan Axilbund	Tri-color Heron Ready for Takeoff
3rd Place	Bill Mugg	Old Blue Eyes



Great photos everyone!
- Janet Gelb, Competition Manager



PSA Report

VPS Finishes Highest Ever in PSA Interclub Competitions

Vienna Photographic Society Earns Third Place Finish in PSA Nature for 2016-2017 Season

PSA Nature Interclub competition was judged at East Troy Viewfinders in East Troy, WI. Images by **Bill Mugg, Mary Rabadan, Ceasar Sharper, Carol Shoemaker, and Kathrin Swoboda** scored 65 points for 6th place in round 3. Kathrin Swoboda received honorable mention for "American Bald Eagle Fresh Catch," a photo she shot recently at Conowingo Dam on a VPS field trip.



After 3 rounds of competition against 38 other camera clubs from across the USA, Europe, and Australia, Vienna Photographic Society finished in 3rd place, the highest finish ever attained by VPS in the PSA Interclub competitions. Thanks go to the judges who selected the images from all the entries: Patricia Deege, Bill Mugg, Gloria Spellman, Bob Bills, David Kepley, and Ceasar Sharper.

Images Juried into PSA Travel Round 3, 2016-2017

Images by **Patricia Deege, Mort Friedman, Bill Mugg, John Nye, Ceasar Sharper, and Wayne Wolfersberger** were selected from 30 entries to represent VPS in the upcoming PSA Travel Interclub competition. Judges were advanced VPS photographers Lou Coglianesi, Mary Jane Fish, and Mort Friedman. Judges who entered were not able to score their own images. Results should be available soon. Images may be viewed here:

<https://www.vpsva.org/g/78ae2099-8684-4112-8cf4-42aaa68b8f05>.

- Kathrin Swoboda, PSA Representative

June 7 Speaker: Dan L. Ward

Astrophotography

(Preparing for the Aug. 21 Total Solar Eclipse)

As an 11-year old, Dan L. Ward first took “close-up” photos of the moon by holding the family’s Brownie Hawkeye camera to the eyepiece of his Gilbert 3” reflector telescope. The results may have been less than spectacular, but were still sufficient to nurture a love of photography and astronomy that continues five decades later.

While living in Arizona in the 1980s, he refined his film astrophotography skills. Several astronomy magazines published his comet, deep sky, and planet photos. Several astronomy books used his images, including David Levy’s best seller, “The Sky: A Users Guide.” His techniques for imaging vibration reduction were cited in Peter Manly’s classic, “The 20-cm Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope and Phil Harrington’s Star Ware” (ed2).

The demands of fatherhood with two daughters, plus career relocations prompted a 20-year hiatus from astronomical pursuits. Dan continued to refine his photographic techniques by pursuing nature and street photography and has been active in several Northern Virginia camera clubs including the Northern Virginia Photographic Society, the Loudoun Photo Club, and the MITRE Photo Club.



In preparation for the Great American Eclipse on Aug. 21, 2017, Dan dusted off his telescope and cracked the books on recent innovations in solar, lunar, and eclipse astro-imaging techniques. Promoting a variety of safe filtering techniques, he encourages others to leverage his sometimes hard learned lessons as they prepare for the solar eclipse event of a lifetime in August.

A sampling of Dan’s astro images can be viewed within his astronomy gallery at <http://danlward.imagekind.com/store/>

NASA’s eclipse site is <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/eclipse-maps>

May 13 Field Trip Reports

Scott's Run Nature Preserve

By Lori Saunders, VP, Field Trips



Our May field trip was to the Scott's Run Nature Preserve in McLean, VA. It's one of only a few nature preserves in the Fairfax County Park Authority's holdings. Janet, Lisette, and I met early at the main parking area to avoid the crowds and did the Scott's Run Hike on the Potomac Heritage Trail to the waterfall. After shooting some long exposures of the falls, we continued along the trail next to the Potomac River, spotting a black jewel-wing damselfly and even a photographer with a ballerina model. It is a great place to hike, particularly in the spring; we were fortunate to have an evenly overcast sky and nice warm temperatures.

Please check VPS's Flickr page for more photos! <https://www.flickr.com/groups/vienna-photographic/> (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/scottsrn/>)

Photos and Text by Lisette Brisebois



Lori Saunders, Janet Gelb, and I met on a perfect day for photography. It was a cool and overcast day and the greens were their greenest. At two points the trail forded streams and we had to walk from round cement block to the next to get to the other side. The path down was slippery and the large gravel uneven. All was forgiven when we got to the beautiful waterfall. Lori is a treasure and was generous in sharing suggestions for photographing the falls with Janet and myself. I am nursing a new to me camera and I long to get back to shooting with my Nikon. Lori was using a long exposure and neutral density filter for some of her shots. We were happy to have the small beach looking out to the falls to ourselves at first. Then came the people and the dogs who swam in the Potomac River and were well mannered enough not to shake themselves off on us and our camera equipment.

When we could finally tear ourselves away from the falls we walked along the river. We were at an in-between time for wildflowers and saw some wild phlox in bloom and many tulip poplar flowers. It looked like wild hydrangeas would be blooming soon. The birds were hard to locate, but there was a very lovely damselfly posing for photos along with a wood nymph.

Scott's Run Nature Preserve is a fun little secret just outside the beltway in Fairfax. It would be worth visiting at different times of year to catch its different moods. - **LB**



Smartphone Lenses

By John Naman

I have clip-on lenses for smartphones that give me telephoto, wide-angle and macro. Macro is awesome and telephoto is great for zooming in on a presenter from the back of a large room. The latest filters and lens clip-on to smartphones, both Android and iPhone.

1) Lenses clip on.



2) 2x telephoto versus regular phone lens (below). After seeing these two stills, I used the telephoto and shot in video mode to record the presentation. The slides and images were much better with telephoto from where I was sitting.



3) 180° fisheye lens versus regular phone lens (below). Note my shoes at bottom, distortion and vignetting at outsides.



4) 10x macro versus regular phone lens as close as I could get and have it focus (below). 10x has shallow depth of field. Compare the size of the flower to my finger holding it. If you buy a macro, I recommend 10x maximum (shown below). 15x has almost no depth of field and you have to be closer than the diameter of your little finger, which is really close! I wish I had gotten an 8x instead of 10x, but it is still useable and fun.



I think that all of the clip-on lenses will do a better job if you have a "Mobile Phone Tripod mount" that hugs the sides of the phone and can be screwed onto a small or large tripod, monopod, set on a table with no tripod, or just held in your hand for better control. I ordered one because of motion blur. They cost about \$5 to \$15.

When using a lens or polarizer, the flash may be covered. Read user reviews for clip length if the top of your phone to down to the lens is more than 1 inch. Some short clips fit "old" phones, but are too short for late model 2016+ phones. ***If you like these short "Tech Notes," please tell Barbara or me so we can publish more next year. Tell us what you are curious about. Thanks! -John Naman, Forums for 2017-2018***

Photographic Excess:

The Admittedly Illogical Pursuit of High Resolution

By Stephen Girimont

I am a landscape photographer who is obsessed with creating the highest-resolution images I possibly can. Not satisfied with the 16, 24, or 36 megapixel resolutions of my cameras by themselves, I have taught myself the fine art of stitching multiple images to create files with enormous resolution. It is not unusual for me to create 75 or 80 megapixel images with incredible detail.

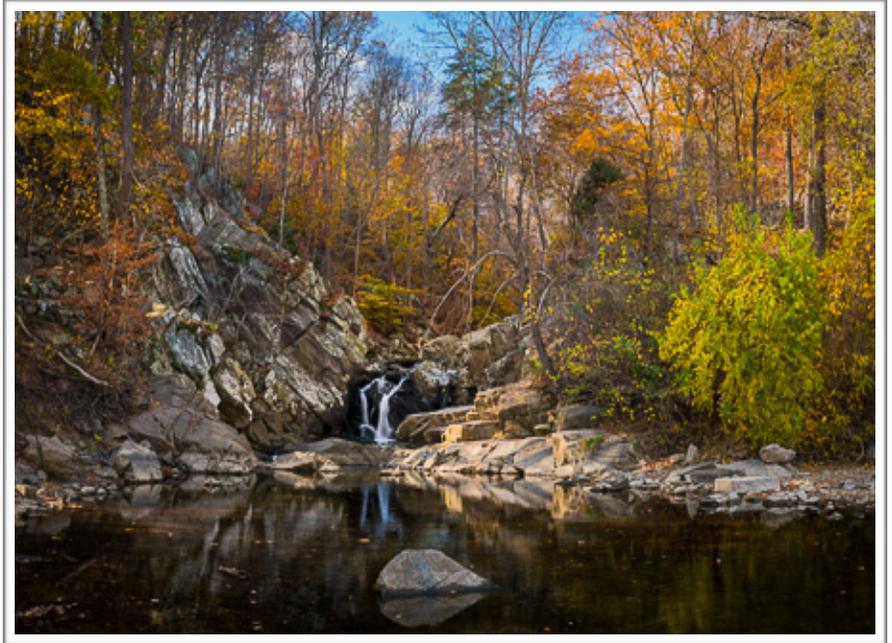
A little over 5 years ago, I commented to a fellow photographer that my dream camera was an Alpa with a high-resolution medium format digital back such as a Phase One. However, as one of those can start at approximately \$40,000, I suggested that an acceptable compromise would be a medium format mirrorless digital camera, if anyone ever came out with such a thing. The common feature between a camera such as an Alpa and a mirrorless camera is the straight, short-distance light path, allowing simpler, higher resolution lens designs (in theory).

When Hasselblad announced their X1D camera last December, I knew the time I had been waiting for was upon us. However, the specs of the camera left me feeling distinctly “meh” about that particular model. There were capabilities missing (such as an articulating LCD screen) that had me less than enthused.

Fast forward to January 19, 2017 and the announcement of the Fuji GFX 50S and I was almost literally hyperventilating at work while reading the pre-release announcements. This camera seemingly had everything I had ever desired in a camera. 51 megapixels, mirrorless, articulating touch-responsive LCD screen, built-in wifi, digital depth-of-field scale on the screen when manually focusing, three-channel histograms, etc., etc. I could not hit that “Preorder” button on the B&H website fast enough. I ordered the camera with the 63mm f/2.8 and 120mm f/4 macro lenses on the morning it was announced.

I had a photography trip out to Arizona scheduled for early April, and the race was on to see if the gear would arrive in time. With one week to spare, I had those beautiful white boxes in hand.

You may have noticed that I did not order a wide-angle lens. Fuji had also announced the availability of a 32-64mm zoom lens, which would provide an equivalent view of a 25mm lens on a full-frame DSLR. But I’ve found that for the majority of the images I shoot, I prefer to stitch multiple images made with a normal to short-telephoto lens giving a wide field-of-view, but with the perspective of a short-telephoto.



*Scotts Run Waterfall - 70.5 Megapixel image
Made with 7 vertical images shot right-to-left
from a Nikon D800 and a Sigma 50mm ART lens*



Horseshoe Bend Sunset - 356 megapixels
Made with 62 vertical images from a Fuji GFX 50S and
Fuji 63mm f/2.8 lens

So what's the first thing I did with that new Fuji 51 megapixel camera? Not satisfied with a measly 51 megapixels, I decided to see just how far I could push my technique (and my computer) and made a massive super-resolution image of Horseshoe Bend by stitching together 62 images! I will admit that I didn't really need that many images. My overlap was probably more than required and I bet I could have gotten away with as few as 45 images, but as I was still unfamiliar with the camera and lens, I felt it was better to be cautious. And besides, if my MacBook Pro could handle that many images, I knew it would be able to handle anything I could throw at it.

The resulting image is a whopping 356 megapixels in size. I began the sequence of images at the upper-

right corner as I knew I needed to shoot the clouds first; the light was going to be fading fast. I was using the 63mm lens and it took two rows of images to cover the sky. By the time I started shooting the canyon itself, the color did indeed fade from the sky, as did the light itself! By the time I was shooting the last images to the lower left, the light was almost completely gone and the images were mostly black. I knew this was also going to be a test of the shadow recovery of the Fuji raw files.

After loading the images into Lightroom, I performed some preliminary adjustments to equalize the light across all the individual images (matching the luminance of the later images to those of the earlier ones as best I could - the shadow recovery possible on these files is FANTASTIC) selected all 62 images, apologized in advance to my computer, selected Photo Merge > Panorama, and sat back to wait.

And wait. And wait. But then! Lo and behold, it worked! A 390.4 megapixel DNG raw file! Turns out I shot a little wider than I intended to on the right side, and my final image is a slight crop from the full stitch.

When working with images of this size, some surprises can be found. I noticed a tiny black dot in the river on the right side of the image. Thinking this might have been a dust spot, I zoomed in to remove it, only to discover that it was a boat, and I could make out the two people standing in it to fish! I suppose the decision as to whether to remove this or not will depend on the size of the print I will be making. At 20x30, I might take it out. At 40x60, I might leave it in.

The desire to be able to print at almost any size with no interpolation (resolution scaling) needed is the driving force behind my obsession with resolution. I have a 24-inch printer, but do I need 100+ megapixel images to make quality prints at that size? Certainly not. I have had beautiful 40x60-inch canvas prints made with crops from 12 megapixel cameras. Do I NEED a 356 megapixel image to make a quality wall-sized print? No! And yet, even if I'm printing one of these super-resolution images on a 13x19 piece of paper, I know that I've worked to put every bit of sharpness and detail that I possibly can into that image. I know that most of that data is simply thrown away when printing at a normal size. That's why I admit that this is an illogical obsession of mine. But it's a cherished illogical obsession that I fully intend to nurture and feed in the years to come.

You can follow my continued pursuit of insanely high resolution by reading my blog at <http://www.theintimatelandscape.com>.

PSA CONFERENCE

Oct. 8-14, Pittsburgh

Wanted: organizer for a VPS group to attend the annual Photographic Society of America conference in Pittsburgh and a VPS photo session at Carrie Furnace. Can you help? Contact David Heagy ([dheagy AT gmail.com](mailto:dheagy@gmail.com))

PSA'S 2017 national conference offers classes, workshops, photo tours, a print exhibition, social events, and vendors. For details, visit: <https://psa-photo.org/index.php?conference-overview>
The conference will offer several tours of the Carrie Steel Furnace display -- but VPS could try to reserve their time before or after the conference to avoid crowds as a field trip. For details, see: <https://www.riversofsteel.com/about/> and <http://substreet.org/carrie-furnaces/>

Visit PSA's web site to learn how Pittsburgh is no longer your grandfather's steel town. Register by July 31 for an early-bird discount.



Photo Opportunities/Member News/Calendar

June 3-30: DAVID KEPLEY is exhibiting more than 20 of his works at the John Hollingsworth Gallery, National Wildlife Visitor Center, Patuxent Research Refuge, 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop Laurel, MD, 301-497-5760. **David is also featured as "Artist of the Month"** on Patuxent's Web site.



<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent/visit/gallery.html>

June 6: HERNDON DEADLINE. Town of Herndon's calendar photo deadline. Details: <http://www.artspaceherndon.com/calls-for-art/>

June 7: SOLAR ECLIPSE SPEAKER. Dan Ward speaks on the solar eclipse at VPS, Thoreau MS Cafeteria, 7:30 pm.

June 9-11: CLASSIC CARS. Photo Op of classic cars and racing, Hershey, PA. Details: <http://theeleganceathershey.com/event/schedule-of-events/>

June 10: DAVID HEAGY speaks about travel photography at the Oakton Library, 2-3 pm. He says, "After you return from a trip, social event, or day on the National Mall, are you satisfied with your photographs? Are you puzzled about what camera to buy? Are you going on an active trip with hiking and biking or a cruise? Have you lost any pictures because of theft or damage to your camera? Did you wish you knew how to go beyond the automatic settings and the "point and shoot" methods to point-compose-shoot? The class includes tips for photographing people, architecture, landscapes, at night, and indoors. We'll cover how to use photographs to plan a trip, five methods for things that are moving, how to take impressive pictures, basic editing for enhancing your photos, and technical terms using everyday examples (depth of field, exposure, aperture, shutter speed, ISO, and color balance). Many of the concepts and tricks apply to point and shoot, SLR, and phone cameras. Both novices and experienced photographer will learn new techniques." Adults and teens. 10304 Lynnhaven Pl., Oakton, 703-242-4020, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ok/>

June 14 PARTY DEADLINE: Last chance to RSVP for VPS's end of year dinner and competition. See May 30 email from Carol Carroll.

June 17: OAKTON LIBRARY. David Heagy, Julie Cochran, and Barbara Saffir accepted the library's invitation to VPS to display some of their photographs. The exhibit ends June 17.



June 25: COFFEE AND CRITIQUE. Glen Echo Coffee and Critique, 10 am to noon. Details: <http://glenechophotoworks.org/2013/05/19/coffee-critique/>

July 31: CONTEST DEADLINE. Deadline for the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Photo Contest For details, visit: <http://vaswcd.org/photocontest>

July 31 KENILWORTH CONTEST DEADLINE: Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens' nature photo contest <http://www.friendsofkenilworthgardens.org/projects/>

Aug. 1: NATURE VISIONS PHOTO EXPO. Ticket Sales Begin. NatureVisions.org

Aug. 31: VIENNA CALENDAR DEADLINE. The deadline for submitting photos to the Town of Vienna for their 2018 Calendar. The scenes must be within the town limits. The dates for events in the town are at <https://www.viennava.gov/calendar.aspx>

September: NATURE'S BEST. 21st Annual Nature's Best Photography Windland Smith Rice International Awards Exhibition at the National Museum of Natural History (<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/exhibits/natures-best-2016/>). Closes September 2017.

Oct. 8-14: PSA CONFERENCE. (See story.)

Nov. 3-5: NATURE VISIONS. NatureVisions.org

VIENNA CALENDAR



Submit Your Photographs for the 2018 Town Of Vienna Calendar

Every other year the Town of Vienna invites VPS to submit our photographs for their annual printed calendar. The scenes must be in the town limits. They prefer ones showing one of their event or the seasons. They will probably ask for them by the end of August and give us a drop box to submit them. Questions? Contact David Heagy at [dheagy AT gmail.com](mailto:dheagy@gmail.com)

Here are some upcoming events:

- Saturdays: Vienna Farmer's Market, 8 to noon, 301 Center Street South
- Fourth of July celebration, 6:30 pm, Southside park, 1315 Ross Drive SW
- Summer performances on the green, most Fridays, 6:30 pm, 144 Maple Avenue E
- June 10, Club Phoenix Improv Show Town Green, 144 Maple Avenue E
- Chillin' on Church Street, 6:30-9:30 pm, June 16, July 21, July 29, Aug 18
- Big splash party, Town Green, July 29, non-stop fun event for the entire family. Includes giant water slides, slip n slides, sprinklers, moonbounces, water games, sno-cones, music, and raffles. Rain date is July 30.
- Vienna Youth Players Production, Aug 4,5, 11, 13, location TBA
- Aug 12, 10 am, Kids Adventure Race. This fun, kid-friendly, obstacle-course race includes hay pyramids, sunken tires, and more. For ages 5-13, Southside Park, 1315 Ross Dr. SW

For details and other events, visit: <https://www.viennava.gov/calendar.aspx>

VPS THEMES FOR 2017-2018



Sept. 20	Nature Summer
Oct. 18	Ducks/Birds Famous places/buildings/memorials
Nov. 15	Working (animals, people, machines) Street Photography
Jan. 17, 2018	Simplicity Abstracts in Nature Digital Art
Feb. 21, 2018	Black & White Winter Digital Art
Mar. 21, 2018	Night Photography Animals in Motion
Apr. 18, 2018	Things that Fly Photojournalism
May 16, 2018	Town of Vienna Flowers Digital Art

VPS Board Members



President	<i>(Vacant until 2017-2018)</i>
First VP	David Kepley
Secretary	Debbi Rife
Treasurer	Burgess Levin
VP-Speakers	Julie Cochran
VP-Judges	John Padbury
VP-Comp.	Janet Gelb
Digital Proj.	Committee
VP Mem Com	Gloria Spellman
PSA Rep	Kathrin Swoboda
Focal Points	Barbara Saffir
Dir Publicity	David Heagy
Membership	Paige Counts
Dir Website	Gloria Spellman
VP Forums	Mort Friedman
VP Field Trips	Lori Saunders
VP Operations	Joseph Morton
Social Events	Carol Carroll
Exhibits	<i>Vacant</i>
Gift Cards	Julie Cochran
50/50 Raffle	Julie Cochran
NatureVis.Rep	Bill Mugg

(To contact the club, please email webmaster@vpsva.org)

FOCAL POINTS newsletter is published monthly except for a combined July/August issue. Please email member news, story ideas, stories, and low-res photos to Editor Barbara Saffir AT Barb22030 at yahoo.com.