

Cobb Photographic Society



2025 *Best of the Year* Photo: Monochrome

January 2026



2025 *Best of the Year* Photo: Color



2025 *Best of the Year* Photo: Novice

2025 Best of the Year Photos

Cover: Standard Division: Monochrome Winner
Gone Fishing, Patrick Olmsted

Second Page: Standard Division: Color Winner
Wet Finish, Jeff Whittingham

Third Page: Novice Division: Overall Winner
Tomes For the Win, Maryann Crow

- 5 Upcoming Activities and Events
- 8 Notes From Around Our Club
- 23 Member-2-Member Classifieds & Websites
- 24 Articles, Tips & Tricks, and Featured Website

This Month's Activities and Events

January 2026



All Month. Photo Challenge: Color. Marc Moskowitz, our Photo Challenge moderator, set up a club FB album for you to post your month's photos [here](#). *This is a fun event for all.* Photos by **Marc Moskowitz, Patrick Olmsted, and Pat Fahey**, are just some of the photos uploaded so far. **All are welcome-** members and non-members- to submit photographs.

Mon-Tue, 5-6 Jan, 10 AM- 7 PM. Exhibition. **Pick up exhibit prints.** Thanks to all who exhibited; one of our best exhibits! **Exhibit members only.**



Mon, 5 Jan, 7 PM. Competition. **Theme: General.** Come and join us at Sewell Mill Library/Cultural Center, 2051 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta for this evening's competition. For this **digital photos-only** competition, there will also be Zoom access [here](#). After the meeting, we'll head out for optional social time. **All are welcome.**



FYI. Sun-Tue, 11-13 Jan 2026. Professional Photographers of America (PPA) and Imaging USA are holding their joint annual Expo in Nashville, TN.

You can register for the online special and other paid options, including the free Expo Pass [here](#).



Sat, 17 Jan, 8:30 AM. **Extended Field Trip.** **Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge.** Join **Rick Olson and Ümit Yüksel** as we visit the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge near Decatur, AL for photographing Sandhill Cranes and more. Note that Rick recommends staying over the night before (optional welcome dinner on Fri, 16 Jan). More information/RSVP form [here](#). Photos by **Rick Olson** and **Ümit Yüksel**. **Members only.**



Continuing Education Evening

Mon, 19 Jan, 7 PM. **Continuing Education.** **Presentation Evening.** Join our host, **Hylos Barrett**, for this evening's Zoom-only educational presentation [here](#). **All are welcome.**



Welcome/Orientation Evening

Tue, 20 Jan, 7 PM. **Welcome/Orientation.** **New Member Zoom.** **Dee Dee Bonesteel**, our club's Secretary and Welcome Chair, **welcomes our newest members** to learn about our club's resources and review the process of competing in our monthly competitions. Q&A time included. Dee Dee will email the Zoom meeting URL a couple of days before the Zoom session to our new members. **New members only.**



*New Member
"Chat and Plan"*

Sat, 24 Jan, 10:30 AM. **Membership.** **"Chat and Plan"**. Building on Tuesday's *New Member Welcome* Zoom session, new members are invited to join **Ronda Clark** at [Switzer Library's](#) breakout rooms to see the next 12 months of planned activities so they can plan their participation in club activities. An optional lunch and a follow-on Marietta Square walkabout that will invariably lead to camera gear, techniques, as well as tips and tricks. New members will receive an email the week before. **New members only.**

Mon, 26 Jan, 3 PM. **Competition.** **Deadline for Digital Images, Theme: *Metro Atlanta*.** Using the updated CPS entry form [here](#), email the entry form and photos to cpsdigital2023@gmail.com. FYI, digital images are required for both Digital-only and **Prints-only** competitions by the above deadline. **Members only.**

Upcoming Activities and Events

Mon, 2 Feb, 7 PM. **Competition.** **Theme: *Metro Atlanta*.** Come and join us at Sewell Mill Library/Cultural Center, 2051 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta for this evening's competition. For this digital photo competition, there will be Zoom access [here](#). After the meeting, we'll head out for social time. **All are welcome.**

Sat, 7 Feb, 10 AM (carpool from Sewell Mill Library leaves at 9:15). **Field Trip.** **Savoy Automobile Museum.** Info/RSVP form [here](#).

Thu-Sun, 9-12 Apr. **Field Trip.** **Extended South Carolina birding (and more) trip.** Info/RSVP form [here](#).

Notes From Around Our Club

Competition Judging: *Second Chance* and *Best of the Year*

Based in New York, **Bruce Byers** is a professional photographer and author specializing in street and travel photography as well as sponsoring photo tours throughout the world. Bruce supported the club in the past as a guest presenter during one of our Monday night education presentations. Visit Bruce's website [here](#).



Continuing Education Presentation: CPS Awards Dinner

Tom Wilson, a noted naturalist and nature photographer wowed our holiday audience with his knowledge of not only camera techniques and nature photography but also bird behaviors to get the best possible photo. Tom's photos were drop-dead gorgeous.



Event Photos
By

Ümit Yüksel
and
Brian Chapman

More event photos
starting on page 16.

Behind the Scenes With CPS' 2025 Best of the Year Photographers

Because our *Best of the Year* photos are always judged in secret by professional photographers, we never have a chance to listen to the winners discuss their photos. Below are solicited comments from the three *Best of the Year* winners. FYI, This year, **Bruce Byers**, a professional New York photographer, was our judge.



Patrick Olmsted (cover page) (Standard: Monochrome):

My primary focus in photography is photographing nature/wildlife.

Where and What. This image was taken in 2025 at Circle B Reserve, located near Lakeland, Florida. The image is a Tri-Colored Heron that is in the process of catching minnows for its primary food source.

Animal Behavior. The Tri-Colored Heron begins this process by looking at the water. It bobs its head up and down until it spots the prey. It then takes off low across the water; never getting its wings wet and appears to be running on top of the water. At some point, it thrusts its head down into the water and then comes out of the water with a minnow in its beak. It then opens its beak and continues to fly into the fish and swallows its meal. The whole process from start to finish is one-two seconds of time.

Gear, Settings, and Technique. For this image I used my Sony A1 with a 600 mm lens on a monopod. The camera settings were F8, 1/3200 second exposure, AUTO ISO, with an exposure compensation of -.3 step. I use back button focus with continuous AF, shooting at 10 frames per second. I normally shoot these birds with the sun behind me, but on this particular morning the only way to get this shot was with the sun in my face. Since it was only a half hour after sunrise, the sun was still low enough in the sky, but I still used exposure compensation to not blow out my highlights.

Post-Processing/Editing- Camera Raw. When I brought the image into Adobe Camera Raw, I decided to convert it to Black and White, because the image really did not have any good color. The first adjustment was with the water. It was a brackish green color, so I used the color mixer and adjusted the green slider in Camera Raw to darken the water. I cropped and made some lighting adjustments as well.

Post-Processing/Editing- Photoshop/Topaz. Once in Photoshop, I used Topaz Denoise as a filter to remove a lot of noise. Since I was shooting AUTO ISO, this image came out of the camera at 12800 ISO. This is about the max ISO that I will ever have on an image. Topaz did clean up the noise but left the image a little softer than I wanted it.

I then created a new layer and ran Topaz Sharpen. After running Topaz sharpen, I created a layer mask and painted in the areas around the face of the bird.

Final thoughts. I like the final image because the sun was low enough in the sky to light the underside of the Heron's wings. Because the water was still, I was able to get a nice reflection.

I am deeply honored to have this image selected as *Best of the Year* in the Monochrome Category. I also have a deep respect for the other photographers who submitted images in this category during the year.



Wet Finish, Jeff Whittingham

Jeff Whittingham (page 2) (Standard: Color):

Where and What. In November 2024 we traveled to Uganda and Rwanda on Natural Habitat's Ultimate Gorilla Trek. The two Gorilla parks we visited are home to approximately the entire world population of 1,000 endangered Mountain Gorillas. A great comeback story from near extinction!

The adventure started at Uganda's Murchison Falls National Park along the Nile River before heading to the Impenetrable National Park for the first two Gorilla treks in the very challenging rain forest terrain. All treks require an individual sherpa to give folks a helping hand and carry gear. Then on to Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda.

Gear, Settings, and Technique. At the end of our last trek of the trip light rain began I had given my close-up camera body/lens to my sherpa. I only had the long-range zoom and iPhone with me. Being at the end of the line the scene appeared before me, I quickly reached for my iPhone and was able to capture this memorable scene.



Tomes For the Win, Maryann Crow

Maryann Crow (page 3) (Novice: Overall):

Background. *Tomes For the Win* refers to the mountain biking legend [John Tomac](#), an iconic and versatile American racer from the late 80s/early 90s, famous for his dominance across the mountain biking disciplines.

Where and What. This is a picture of a shadow of a mountain biker statue outside a local Sheel's store (like Bass Pro or Cabela's) in Wichita, KS. It was pretty close to the store wall.

Technique. I spent a lot of hours waiting for the sun to be low enough to make the shadow look realistic.

They Say It's Your...

Birthday!

- 10 Jan- **Jeff Willingham**
- 11 Jan- **Bill White**
- 11 Jan- **Melissa Moody**
- 12 Jan- **Guy Marlow**
- 13 Jan- **Rob Herman**
- 19 Jan- **Patricia Bonilla**
- 29 Jan- **Kim Koch**

2026 Competition Standings- Overall and Division

Every January, we clear the totals and begin fresh for next year. The 2026 end of year winners are determined by a running point total, January through November, for each of our three divisions. Points are awarded for each winning 2026 photo based on the award level (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mention). The highest points= *Photographer of the Year* in the *Novice*; *Standard: Color*; and *Standard: Monochrome* divisions. And the one award to rule them all (Standard: Color + Standard: Monochrome), *Photographer of the Year*.

Overall:	Jan competition results in next month's magazine
Novice Division:	Jan competition results in next month's magazine
Standard Division: Monochrome:	Jan competition results in next month's magazine
Standard Division: Color	Jan competition results in next month's magazine

Monthly CPS YouTube Presentations



You can review our club's library of the latest saved presentation videos from the last 4+ years [here](#) except for the latest presentation videos below:

- Nov 2025- Glen Varnhagan's, video is [here](#).
- Oct 2025 Mike Birnbaum's, *Photographing Nature's Food Chain*, video is [here](#).
- FYI, Sep 2025 presentation time was spent between members sharing photos and a lot of informative, "behind the scene" details.
- Aug 2025 David Johnston's, *The Magic of Waterfall Photography*, video is [here](#).
- Jul 2025 Mike Robertson's, *Off Camera Lighting*, video is [here](#).
- Jun 2025 Tom Wilson's, *Favorite Places to Photograph Just Outside GA*, video is [here](#).

New Member Introductions



I'm **Maryann Crow**, all one word, all stuck together! I spend my time in KS where I live or in NH where my dad's house is or traveling around to visit friends. I met some of you on a practice run up in Dallas before a shoot out and I also went along on the Sloss Furnace trip last November.

I take lots of pictures, and thoroughly enjoy it, however, they are just pictures. I hope to learn more about composition and what makes a picture stunning and eye catching. Photos I have that are wows are sadly more just luck! I don't do much editing, so what you see is about what I took, at least for now.

I am taking an online course on landscape photography and am amazed at how the photo editing process can transform an image. I always thought photographers captured it that way in-camera. My images never looked like those! I scrapbook a lot of my photos of trips and/or my kids (a son & twin girls) and their activities. To me, scrapbooking makes up for the lack of a "wow" image. I am currently using a Canon EOS 7D Mark II. When I don't feel like lugging a lot of equipment, I carry a Canon PowerShot G12 which I love because it has a flip out screen.



Hi, I am **Spencer Humphrey** and my desire to express myself visually is non-negotiable. When I'm not behind the lens, I'm the designated paparazzi for my *home team*, my wife Allison, and our four daughters.

When I'm not documenting their adventures or obeying our dog, Pretzel (who definitely runs the house), I'm usually enjoying the finer things in life—like a bowl of chili or a long bike ride.

I once abandoned a cross-country road trip just because the food in Santa Fe was too good to leave.

I'm excited to join the society to sharpen my eye and capture more of the beauty that surrounds us.

Fall 2025 People's Choice Award

And the winner is...



Competing with some very fine photographic print exhibits, **Patrick Olmsted's**, *Spotting the Landing* received the most votes since the exhibit's reception opening on 20 November.

2025 appears to be Patrick's year of recognition. Last month, he won the Monochrome Division's 2025 **Second Chance** award and advanced to the *Best of the Year* Monochrome photo competition. Patrick was obviously still on a winning streak because he won the Monochrome Division's 2025 **Best of the Year** photo that is on the cover of this CPS magazine (different photo).

Congratulations!

2026 Dues Are... Due



Please pay your 2026 \$40 dues by mid-January.

A couple of options are:



1. PayPal link: You can click [here](#) (go to the bottom of the club's web page for the **Pay with PayPal** button).

2. Pay by cash or check in-person at our competition meeting or any field trip, learning workshop, or social event.

Mail your check directly to our Treasurer, **Rob Herman** at: Cobb Photographic Society, c/o Rob Herman, CPS Treasurer 1020 Millridge Lane SE Marietta, GA 30067-5472.

Update Your Camera's Copyright Information

© Don't forget to update your camera's copyright year. For Nikon, **Setup menu, Copyright Information, Artist and Copyright, Attach Copyright Information.**

CPS 2026 Monthly Photo Challenge Themes Schedule

This is a ***FUN month-long challenge*** for all to participate and post their photos to a specific monthly club FB album during the months of January through November.

Marc Moskowitz, Photo Challenge Chair, will open every month's theme about a week early for posting to a FB album. As an example: Friday, 25 July, Marc provides all club members with a link to the August 2025 Photo Challenge album, *America the Beautiful*, for uploading from 25 July through the end of August.

No prizes and no awards; just your personal participation in a fun, helpful environment! If you have questions, contact Marc [here](#).

Monthly Photo Challenge (all month)	Photo Challenge Theme
2026	
January	Colors
February	A World in Black and White
March	Food
April	Tiny Things
May	Words Around Us
June	What is That? (Crop to an interesting portion of something we would normally recognize. Describe what the full photo is in the description when you upload the photo to the June FB album.)
July	Our Furry Friends
August	Planes, Trains, Buses, and Cars
September	Reflections
October	Parts and Pieces
November	Flowers
December	(no Photo Challenge; enjoy the holidays)

CPS 2026 Monthly Competition Themes Schedule

Monday Deadline for Digital Submission	Monday Competition Evening	Competition Theme
2026		
December 29	January 5*	General
January 26	February 2	Metro Atlanta (Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton counties)
February 23	March 2	Juxtaposition Prints-only
March 30	April 6	Shapes
April 27	May 4	Unusual Perspective
May 25	June 1	Wildlife and Water Prints-only
July 6	July 13**	Patterns
July 27	August 3	Something Old / Vintage
September 7	September 14**	Bridges or Tunnels Prints-only
September 28	October 5	Taken With a Smart Phone
October 26	November 2	Bokeh / Beautiful Blur
November 16	(closed) ***	Winning 2026 photos compete for a wild card 1st place in each of the three divisions. ***

Unsure of what a theme means/looks like? Our Competition Chair, **Laura Prescott**, developed a reference document with definitions/pictures for every 2026 month [here](#).

* January's Competition is wide open! No limit on the theme (family-friendly) or the date when the photograph was taken. Wide open competition for your best photos ever!

** July and September Competition evenings are always pushed back a week due to the 4th of July and Labor Day holidays.

*** Club members who placed 2nd place through Honorable Mention during the year can compete for a wild-card first place in the *Best of the Year* competition in our Novice, Standard: Color, and Standard: Monochrome divisions. Winners will be announced at our December Christmas party.

Prints-only - Three themes a year are set aside for **Prints-only** monthly competitions. There is no Zoom session during the three Prints-only competitions; we encourage you to come to Sewell Mill Library/Cultural Center's *Black Box Theater* and personally view our members' print craftsmanship.

Note: No AI is allowed in any submitted digital or printed photo; it must be *all your work*.

Social: Annual Awards Dinner/Presentation/Social (1 of 5)

Our annual event was a rousing success due to the efforts of:

- Setting up table and room decorations- **Dee Dee Bonesteel** and club volunteers
- Event photographers- **Ümit Yüksel** and **Brian Chapman**
- Sound and projection team- **Ralph Burr** and **Melissa Moody**
- Installation Officer- **Ralph Burr**
- Presentation speaker selection committee- **Rick Olson**
- Awards recognition and awards presenter- **Laura Prescott**

Our presenter, **Tom Wilson**, was a force of (bird) nature, a top-notch presenter and a walking encyclopedia of birds (and other critters) throughout the southern states.

This year could only have happened with the support and involvement of our club's officers and chairs as well as other club members who volunteered for projects throughout the year. With 50+ years of service as the Cobb Photographic Society under our belts, CPS is a community of people joined through common photographic interest and friendship.

Event Background: *Second Chance* and *Photos of the Year* winners were recognized as well as our awards recipients. **Jeff Westland** and **Phyllis Westland** had previous commitments (that's why you only see Joyce getting an award in the scrapbook below) but we pushed on to recognize our top scoring photographers:

Novice Division:	Joyce Harrison
Standard Division: Monochrome:	Phyllis Westland
Standard Division: Color:	Jeff Westland
Overall [Monochrome and Color]	Phyllis Westland

Our evening is recorded in this LARGE scrapbook (thanks to Ümit and Brian) and photos appear in no particular order:



Social: Annual Awards Dinner/Presentation/Social (2 of 5)



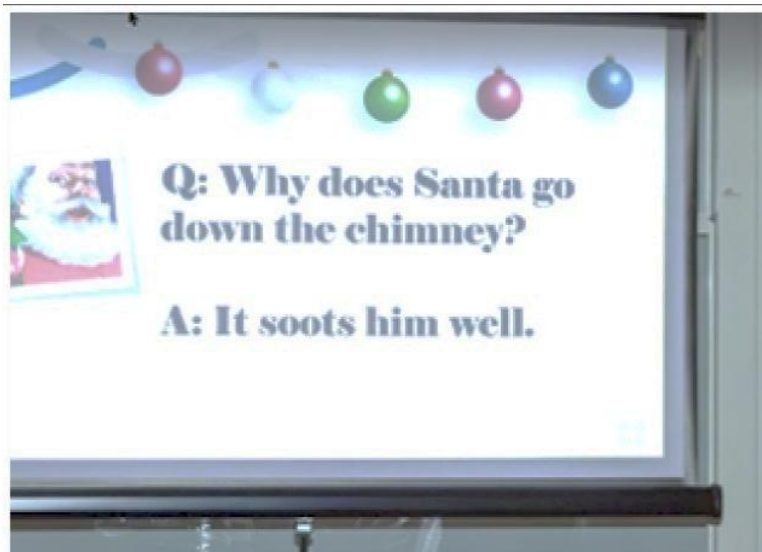
Social: Annual Awards Dinner/Presentation/Social (3 of 5)



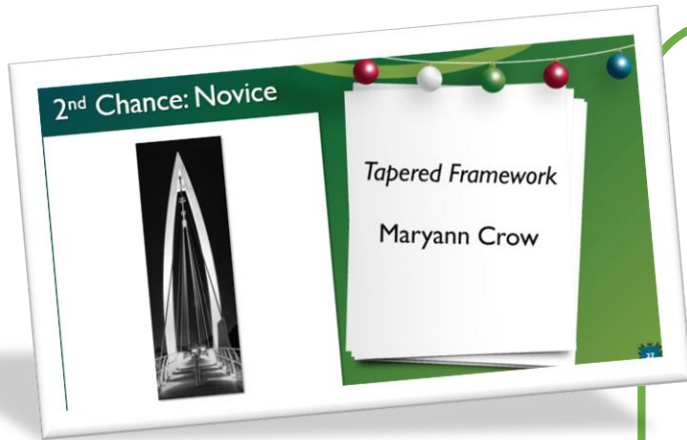
Social: Annual Awards Dinner/Presentation/Social (4 of 5)



Social: Annual Awards Dinner/Presentation/Social (5 of 5)



Behind the Scenes With CPS' 2025 Second Chance Photographers (1 of 2)



“The *Tapered Framework* photo is one of two bow-and-arrow-inspired cable-stay bridges which span the Little and Big Arkansas rivers so pedestrians can access the Keeper of the Plains statue, a symbol for the city of Wichita, KS and a tribute to the Native American tribes who continue to gather at this sacred site (rocks at the confluence of the 2 rivers).”



“The *Brick and Lace* photo was taken in Italy. The scene somehow reminded me of my grandmother, who grew up in hardship and learned to take care of herself; yet she was gentle and possessed all the traits of beautiful, dainty lace. I was drawn to the stark contrast between the roughness of the old, weathered, peeling mortar and paint and the softness of the lace.

I remember the lighting being a challenge. At the time, I didn't think it was ideal to have hard shadows running across the bottom, as they made exposure a bit difficult. I took the shot and hoped I could work with the shadows somehow.

I used curves in Photoshop to pull out every detail I could squeeze from the image. I played with the light and tonality of every inch, working on each area individually. Each had a role to play in the whole. After I had finished, I halfway expected my grandmother to peek out from behind the lace.”

Behind the Scenes With CPS' 2025 Second Chance Photographers (2 of 2)



[**Editor:** Patrick's *Second Chance* photo, considered along with all the year's first place photos, placed first. His detailed narrative explaining his camera technique and post-editing is detailed on page 9 of this magazine. Below are Patrick's thoughts on the value of competition for all of us.]

"I have been a member of this club for two years now and as I have said before, I participate in the monthly club competition to learn from the judges' comments and to learn from my fellow competitors. While these are my primary objectives, it does not mean that I am not into the competitive nature of the monthly competition.

There are three aspects of the monthly competition that can be beneficial for every photographer.

The first aspect being the professional way in which the competition is run, requiring everyone to follow guidelines for submission. Namely, allowing only a specific size, formatting, removing your metadata, and providing a name for your entry.

The second aspect is having a Novice division, as well as a Color and Monochrome division for those that have a little more experience. This provides a chance for all members of the club to be able to participate at their level of expertise.

The third aspect is having an independent judge who reviews each entry and provides feedback during the competition evening and then selects the winning images for the month. Every participant can learn from the judges' comments and from seeing each other's entries.

As an added bonus, at the end of the year is the chance to re-enter some of your non-first place entries into a Second chance competition. Seeing what my fellow photographers entered for the Monochrome completion this year, I am deeply honored to have been recognized as the first place finisher in the Second Chance competition for my photo entitled, *Gone Fishing*."

Member-2-Member's Classifieds

Creative Photography Workshop with Club Member, David Batley



David Batley will be conducting his next photo workshop at Smith-Gilbert Gardens, **Sat, 3 April**. Fee is \$35.

“FYI, Smith-Gilbert Gardens’ renovations are complete!

The workshop is for photographers of all levels. We will have fun photographing the many flowers and landscapes in the gardens.

Registration is easy: contact Smith-Gilbert Gardens at 770-919-0248.”

David is also available for private, one-to-one instruction. Call David for details, 404-314-6359.

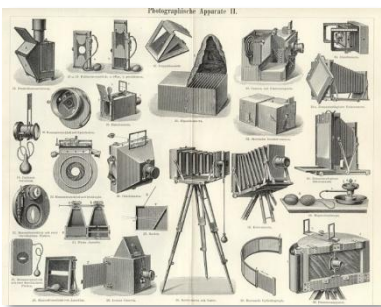
Stay Tuned for Upcoming Workshops with Club Member, Mark Chandler



Another experienced instructor who is a long-time club member and our Exhibit and Social Media Chairs, **Mark Chandler**, will have classes in the near future.

Check back here next month for Mark’s upcoming classes.

Donate Photography Gear/Books/Videos- 2 March 2026



It’s a new year and a perfect time to take a look at your stuff and consider passing photo gear/books/videos you haven’t used for a while to other members.

On 2 March, we’ll have tables set up in the *Black Box Theater* at Sewell Mill Library/Cultural Center (it’s a **Prints-only** competition evening) for gear, books, and photography videos you would like to donate to club members.



Make 2026 your year to act on photo equipment you can do without.

Articles, Tips & Tricks, and Featured Website

Adobe Newest Photoshop Tool: Color and Vibrance Adjustment Layer

One of the many new Photoshop tools, this new adjustment layer provides adjustments in one location for: Temperature, Tint, Vibrance, Saturation, and White Balance. This helps to easily balance color for more natural-looking colors in your images.

1. Select **File > Open** to browse and select an image.
2. In the **Layers** panel, select **Create new fill or adjustment layer** and choose **Color and vibrance** to adjust the colors.
3. In the **Properties** panel, adjust these sliders:
 - **Temperature**: Adjusts the warmth or coolness of the colors.
 - **Tint**: Shifts colors toward green or magenta.
 - **Vibrance**: Increases the intensity of muted colors.
 - **Saturation**: Adjusts the overall intensity of colors.
4. Name the layer, set layer options, and press **Enter** (or **Return** on macOS).

You can also set the temperature and tint by selecting the eyedropper tool in Properties Panel, then selecting a neutral area of the image.

If you prefer to use a previous color model, select the **Use Legacy** checkbox in the Properties panel.

(text from adobe.com) [Ed: the YouTube videos for this tool are “lacking” at this time. I couldn’t find one video to recommend viewing this month.]

The Most Common Smartphone Photo Mistake



Tim Grey, a Lightroom Classic instructor who’s been around for a long time, answers a question most days on his *Ask Tim Grey* website/blog that is located [here](#). Tim also has a YouTube channel, *Tim Grey TV*, that answers questions in video format [here](#).

8 Dec 2025: Today's Question: “As smartphones become more and more impressive in terms of photo quality, I wonder if there's a particular mistake you find is most common that results in poor smartphone photos?”

Tim's Quick Answer: Yes! In my view the most common mistake I see that can result in seriously degraded photos is to have fingerprints or other smudges on the smartphone lens.

More Detail (Editor: edited for space): Smartphone cameras have become incredibly impressive in terms of image quality. This is partly due to improved image sensors, partly due to improved lens quality, and significantly due to advanced image processing. In terms of overall image quality many smartphones are on par with the quality of many other “real” cameras (which at this point perhaps just means cameras that can't make phone calls).

While the smartphones themselves have gotten really impressive in terms of image quality, I frequently find that smudges on the lens lead to seriously degraded photo quality. This is certainly understandable considering smartphones generally get handled quite a bit and are often kept in a pocket without any protection for the lens.

Therefore, one of the things I think you should keep top of mind is to regularly clean the lenses on your smartphone, especially before a session/photo opportunity.”

Featured Website: International Landscape Photographer of the Year

We've all done landscapes but wait until you view these photo winners. What I noticed immediately is how the photos have the look of fine art and some are wonderful abstracts.

Mother Nature, revealed by caring photographers, can't be beat for beauty and wonder.

The source site requires a password so I'm using the PetaPixel website [here](#).



Did you enjoy our club's monthly magazine?

Our club is a great community to expand your photo skills and make new friendships with other photographers.

Come join us!



<http://www.cobbphotosociety.com/membership>

50+ YEARS
1974 - AND GOING STRONG

CPS editors: Pat Fahey and Margaret Waage