

Cobb Photographic Society



February 2026



Competition Theme: *General (no theme/time restrictions)*

(Cover) Winner- Monochrome

Jolly Jellyfish

Michael Birnbaum

(Above) Winner- Color

Serengeti Sunset

Jeff Whittingham



Winner- Novice
A Peek at Roman History
Joyce Harrison

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This Month's Activities and Events

February 2026

All Month. Photo Challenge. *A World in Black and White*. 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 **Melissa Moody, Margaret Waage, Nick Fenton, and Spiff Carner** are just some of the photos uploaded so far. **All are welcome-** members and non-members- to submit photographs.



Competition Evening

Mon, 2 Feb, 7 PM. Competition. *Atlanta Metro*. 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 optional social time. **All are welcome.**



Sat, 7 Feb, 10 AM (carpool leaves Sewell Mill at 9:15 AM). **Field Trip. *Savoy Automobile Museum*.** Join **Rick Olson** on a popular field trip to a very cool auto museum in Cartersville that is a perfect field trip for wintry January/February. **Note: No tripods or camera bags in the museum.** More information/RSVP [here](#). Photos by (unknown). **Members only.**

Wed, 14 Feb. *Valentine's Day* (We're just trying to keep you guys out of trouble).



Continuing Education Evening

Mon, 16 Feb, 7 PM. Continuing Education. Presentation Evening. Join our host, **Hylos Barrett**, for this evening's Zoom-only educational presentation [here](#). Hylos will email all club members the week before with more information. **All are welcome.**



Welcome/Orientation Evening

Tue, 17 Feb, 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, 21 Feb, 10:30 AM. Membership. New Member Meeting. 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. Ronda will email new members the week before. **New members only.**

Mon, 23 Feb, 3 PM. Competition. Deadline for Digital Images, Theme: Juxtaposition. Using the updated CPS entry form [here](#), email the entry form and photos to cpsdigital2023@gmail.com. Digital photos are required for both digital only and **Prints Only** competitions by the above deadline. **Members only.**

Next Month's Activities and Events

Mon, 2 Mar, 7 PM. *Competition. Juxtaposition.* Come and join us at Sewell Mill Library/Cultural Center, 2051 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta for this evening's competition. **All are welcome.** For this **Prints Only** competition, there will be no Zoom access. We invite all to come and see the printed photos. After the meeting, we'll head out for social time. **All are welcome.**

Sun, 8 Mar. Daylight Savings. Adjust clocks to "jump" forward an hour.

Sat, 21 Mar, 9 AM (Carpool leaves Sewell Mill Library at 7 AM). *Field Trip. Spring Flowers- Shirley Miller Wildlife Trail.* Join **Rick Olson** on a delightful field trip for Spring flowers near Chickamauga. More information/RSVP [here](#). **Members only.**

FYI, we're working to firm up/work through scheduling dates/location conflicts for our late Mar and April events:

- Android Smartphone Learning Workshop
- iPhone Learning Workshop
- Spring Summer Social

Notes From Around Our Club

Competition Evening- *General* (no time or theme restrictions).

This evening, our judge was **Jeff Milsteen**, a long-time supporter of the club with many presentations and judging evenings under his belt. One of Jeff's many take-away tips were to take your photo and hang it on the wall (or show the photo full screen on your computer). From there, step back as if you're in a gallery and look at the photo objectively and ask yourself: does the photo have proper color, composition, and cropping?



Photos by
**Jeff
Westland**

Presentation Evening- *Creative Ways to Photograph Flowers.*



Mike Moats, another long-time supporter of the club, provided many tips and tricks when photographing close-up photography.

A great photo set-up reminder from Mike? When outside, use a diffuser.



They Say It's Your...

Birthday!

- Feb. 01- **Mike Guting**
- Feb. 10- **Mike Birnbaum**
- Feb. 11- **Jeff Westland**
- Feb. 18- **Bruce Lepard**
- Feb. 24- **Dee Dee Bonesteel**
- Feb. 25- **Karen Kaderlik**

New Member Introduction.



Rick (Spiff) Carner.

"From the confines of Atlanta's Fox 97 radio studio to the streets and hiking trails of Georgia, *Spiff Happens!*

After a successful radio career as half of "The Randy & Spiff Morning Show," which resulted in their induction into the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame,

I now wander around North Georgia with my camera in hand. I enjoy taking photos of the wildlife and beautiful nature scenes found at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, as well as the not-so-wild life on the streets of picturesque towns like Marietta.

With apologies to Stephen Stills, I believe in the lyrics ...

♪ *And if you can't be with the lens you love, honey*
... Love the lens you're with. ♪

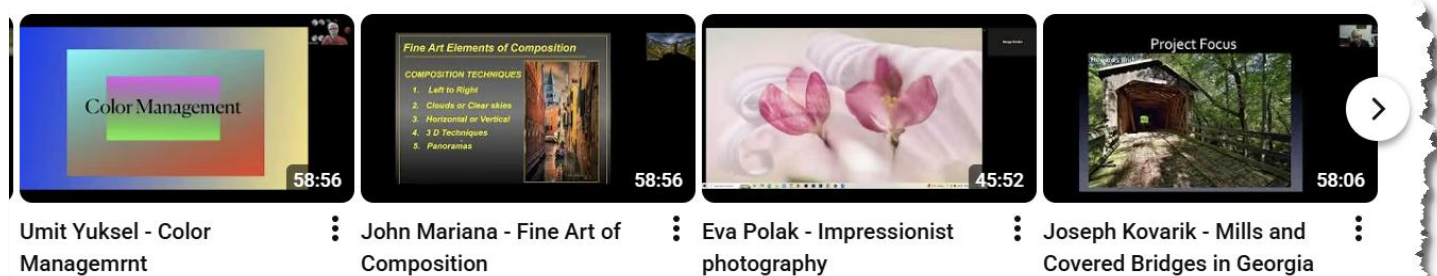
Connect with Spiff on IG: [@spiffhappens](https://www.instagram.com/spiffhappens) or on his website: spiffstreet.com."

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:	Patrick Olmsted
Novice Division:	Joyce Harrison
Standard Division: Monochrome:	Michael Birnbaum
Standard Division: Color	Jeff Whittingham

Monthly CPS YouTube Presentations.



Over the last months, we've experienced problems posting to our CPS YouTube site. These missing videos are listed below and older videos are posted on our YouTube site [here](#):

- Jan 2026, Mike Moats' *Creative Ways to Photograph Flowers* is [here](#).
- Nov 2025, Glen Varnhagan's *Planning Your Trip* is [here](#).
- Oct 2025, Mike Birnbaum's *Photographing Nature's Food Chain* is [here](#).
- FYI, Sep 2025 presentation was not recorded. Time was spent between members sharing photos and a lot of informative, "Behind the Scenes" details.
- Aug 2025, David Johnston's *The Magic of Waterfall Photography* is [here](#).
- Jul 2025, Mike Robertson's *Off Camera Lighting* is [here](#).
- Jun 2025, Tom Wilson's *Favorite Places to Photograph Just Outside GA*, video is [here](#).

Standard- Color Competition Winners



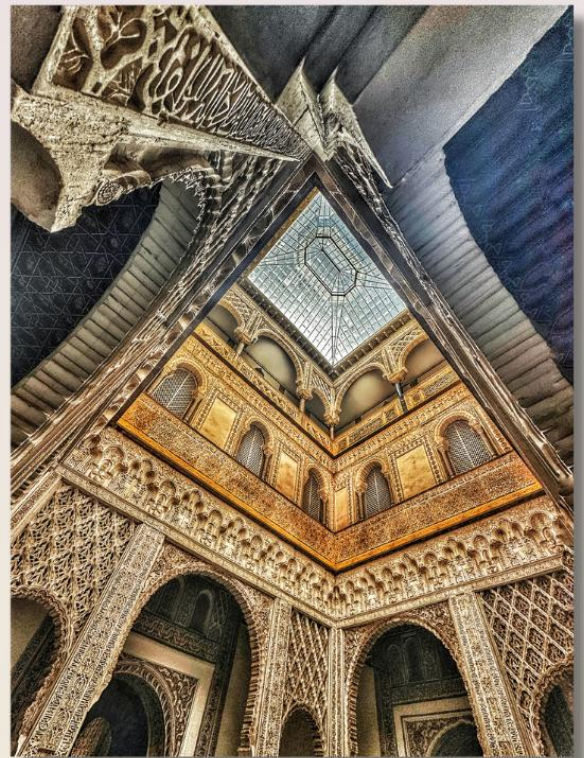
Second Place
Spotting the Landing
Patrick Olmsted



Honorable Mention
A Different Perspective
Natalie Birnbaum



Third Place
Joro Spider
Angie Nasrallah



Honorable Mention
Arabic Architectural
Jeff Westland

Novice Competition Winners



Third Place
Peaceful Serenity
Maryann Crow



Second Place
Alpine Paradise
Joyce Harrison



Honorable Mention
On the Verge of Success
Maryann Crow

Standard- Monochrome Competition Winners



Second Place
Entering the New Year
Jeff Westland



Third Place
Branchlet for My Love
Patrick Olmsted



Honorable Mention
Cypress Grove
Marc Moskowitz



Honorable Mention
Cool Dude
Ben Moravitz

Paul Shimek's "Welcome Back For a Little While" Luncheon.

Paul, an honorary CPS member with over 30 years of membership, recently retired, sold his home, and departed Atlanta to see the world.

Fast forward one year of travel and Paul is back in town for a brief time before resuming his travel, documenting it all as only Paul can do (in an excellent manner).

Paul was joined by (left to right) **Pat Fahey**, **Paul Shimek**, **Martin O'Toole**, a longtime friend of Paul's and club member, **Charlie Stannard**, **Joyce Harrison**, **Ümit Yüksel**, and the event organizer, **Melissa Moody**. Thanks, Melissa!



CPS 2026 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
2025	
October	I Found It On a Walk
November	Past Their Prime
December	(no Photo Challenge; enjoy the holidays)
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 2025-2026 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*.

Field Trip: Wheeler Wildlife Refuge.

Field trip leaders, **Rick Olson** and **Ümit Yüksel** did a great job coordinating and trouble-shooting issues as they arose during the day-long photography of Sandhill Cranes and other birds. You can view the photos by CPS and NGPC photographers **Jeanene Hamaker, Rick Olson, Bill White, Lisa Hilty, Ali Vaesi, Lesley Wynn, Patrick Olmsted, Charlie Stannard, Dave Sladen, Charlie Stannard, Dan Rhoads,** and **Mike Wilson.** Note: Jeanene and Ali's photos are in this FB's Discussion feed. You can view the full-size photos [here](#).

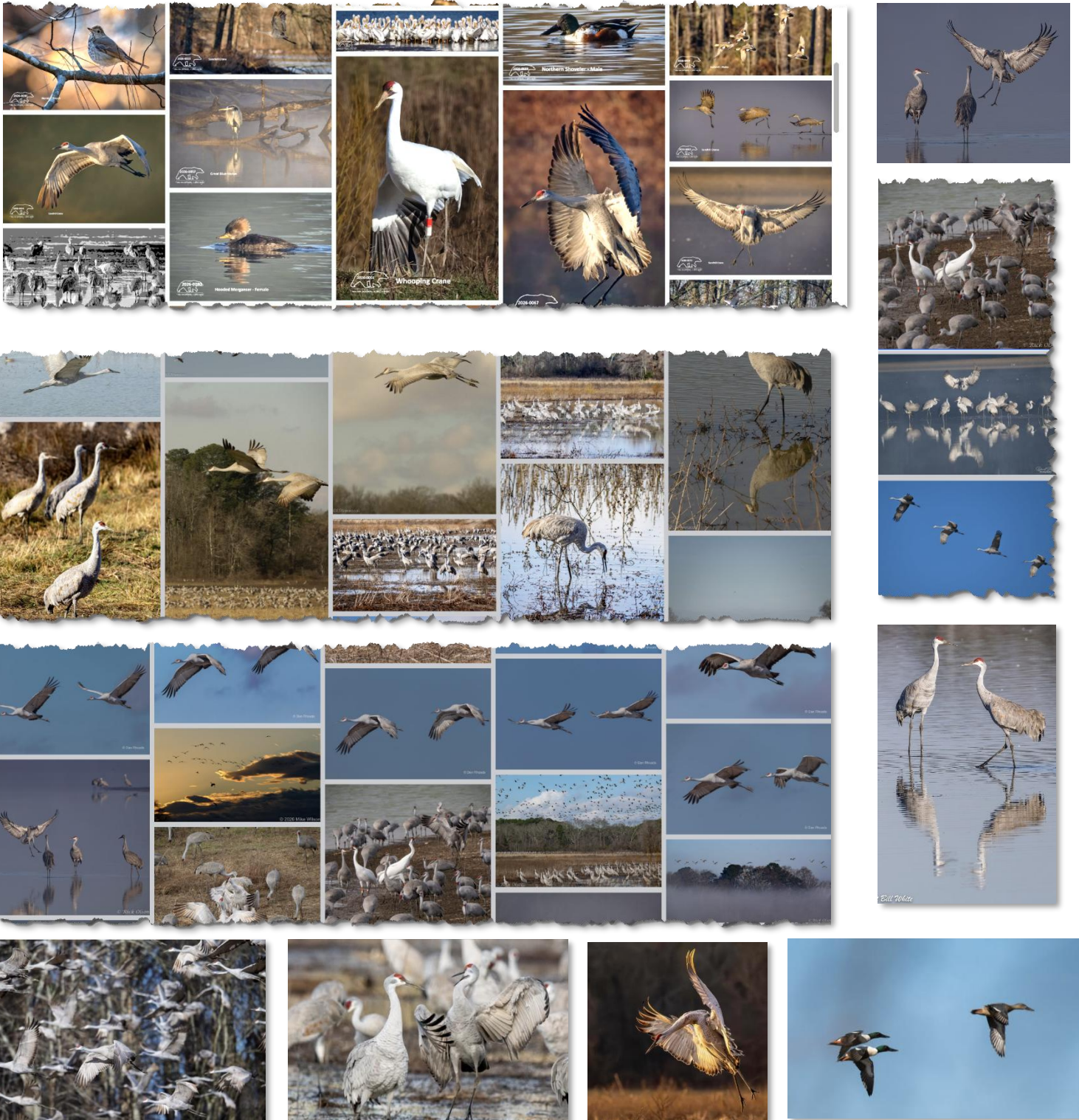
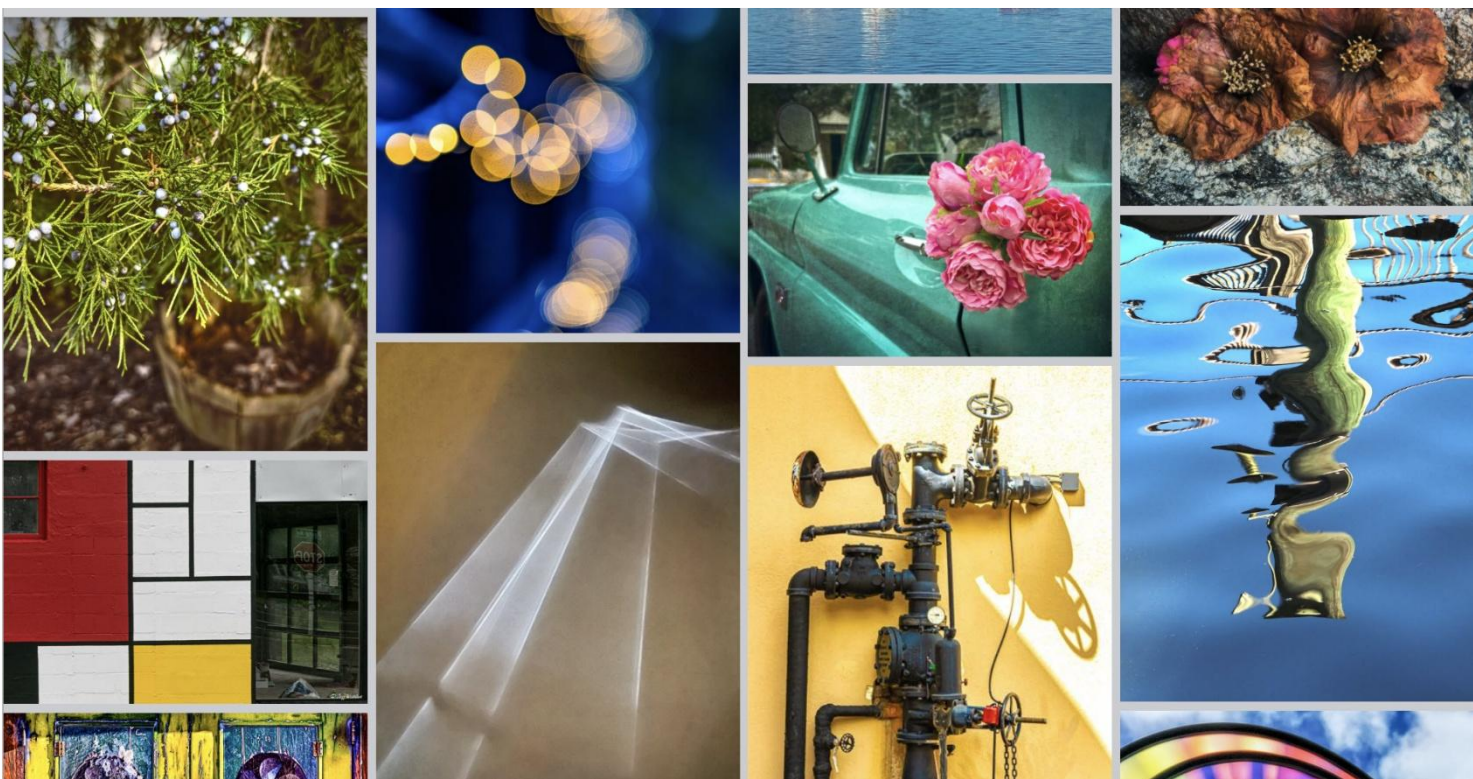
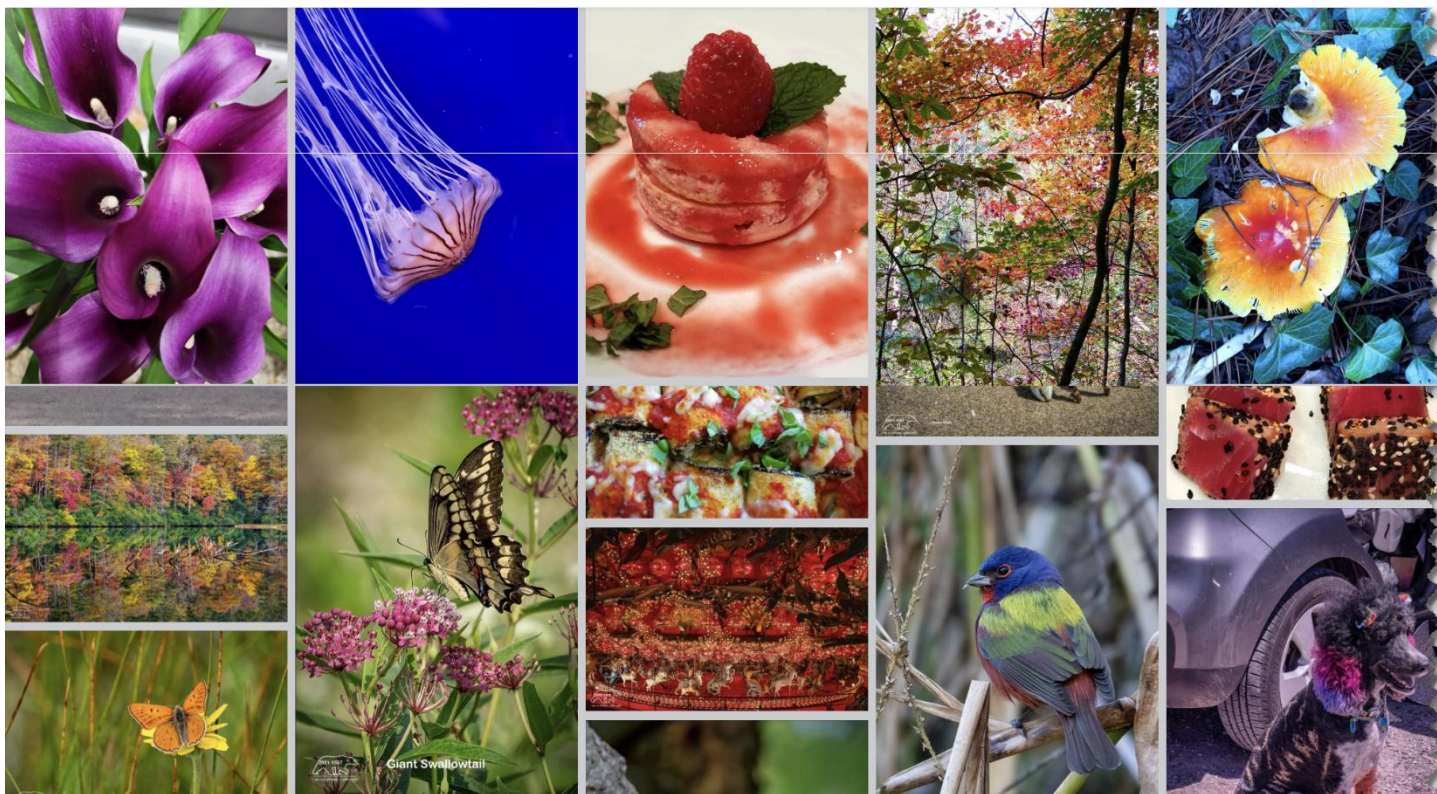


Photo Challenge: Color.

Another fun month of images. Enjoy the photos of **Marc Moskowitz, Patrick Olmsted, Dee Dee Bonesteel, Larry Butts, Paula Kaczmarowski, Pat Fahey, Margaret Waage, Jeff Westland, Rob Herman, Lou Fuentes, Melissa Moody, and Laura Prescott.** You can view the full-size photos [here](#).



Member2Member Classifieds

Creative Photography Workshop with Club Member, David Batley.



David Batley will be conducting his next photo workshop at Smith-Gilbert Gardens on **Saturday, 11 April**, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm. No classes in February or March due to weather conditions in the Gardens. 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.

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.

Mike Moats Kicks Off His Flower Photography Club.



Mike Moats informed us during this month's presentation that he started his *Flower Photography Club* Facebook site for paid members- posting flowers for review/discussion, Q&A, and the starting of a video library of all future monthly guest speaker videos.

If you'd like more information on how to join with a one-time lifetime membership of \$79, visit

<https://www.mikemoats.com/flower-photo-club>

Articles, Tips & Tricks, and Featured Website

Articles and Tips & Tricks.

Witness a Photo Resurrection.

In the example below, club member **Charlie Stannard**, shot an underexposed photo while on a recent African Safari.

In years past, Charlie may've written the underexposed photo as "Dead On Arrival."

Says Charlie, "Same image; I denoised, increased exposure, opened up shadows, and added some texture and clarity."



The Global Adventures (So Far) of Paul Shimek (1 of 5).



As some may recall, in December 2024, **Paul Shimek** received a CPS Honorary Membership after 30 years with Cobb Photographic Society. Paul's award recognized that his photos consistently placed in almost all of our many competitions over the years. As an aside, the photos he selected for the video viewed at the 2024 annual Awards Dinner is [here](#).

While noteworthy, this recognition paled when we learned Paul retired from law practice, sold his home, and was leaving to see and photograph the world.

The next time we saw Paul was in January 2026 at a luncheon held here in Marietta (page 13). At the luncheon, we heard stories of Paul's journey and learned that he will be returning to see and photograph "the world."

"This map shows my travels from December 10, 2024, through December 30, 2025. Prior to starting this trip, I visited 86 countries. The number beside the countries listed below and the following pages is a running total. For example, I began this trip with Belize, the 87th country to visit. Countries listed without a number are ones I had previously visited. My goal is to visit every country in the world, and you are invited to follow me on this journey. To date, I have been to 120 countries." [Ed: Photo/BTS/Camera information follows each page]



The Amazing Adventures (So Far) of Paul Shimek (3 of 5).

Photo Legend for Paul Shimek's Travel Photos, Photo/Map Layout, 1 of 2 (clockwise):

- **Guatemala.** This image was taken on a hike up to the Mirador from the village Santa Catarina Palopó on Lake Atitlán, Guatemala.

Technical Data: 2/2/25; iPhone 14 Pro.

- **Guatemala.** Sunrise over Lake Atitlán in Guatemala, is one of my favorite places in Central America. Lake Atitlán is a nearly mile-high caldera lake surrounded by three prominent, cone-shaped volcanoes pictured in the background. I made this image from the village of San Marcus.

Technical Data: 2/1/25; iPhone 14 Pro.

- **Panama.** Guna woman in traditional dress selling molas (yoke-type blouses richly decorated by intricate needlework) in Casco Viejo, the historic district of Panama City.

Technical Data: 3/26/25; Canon EOS R6 Mark II; RF24-105 @ 95mm; ISO 1000; f/11; 1/45 sec.

- **Panama.** I believe this is a Marbled Tree Frog (*Dendropsophus marmoratus*), which I found on a night hike in the Chiriqui Highlands of western Panama.

Technical Data: 3/30/25; Canon EOS R6 Mark II; 100mm macro lens; ISO 100; f/11; 1/250 sec; hand held; Canon Speedlight EL-10 flash with LumiQuest SoftBox diffuser.

- **Argentina.** Westward view of Plaza de Congreso after sunset from the top of Palacio Barolo, a historical building in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Technical Data: 6/5/25; Canon EOS R6 Mark II; RF24-105 @ 67mm; ISO 2000; f/8; 1/10 sec.

- **Argentina.** While wondering around the area of the Faculty of Law of the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, I came across this colorful walkway. I set up and waited for this jogger to come into the scene for the decisive moment.

Technical Data: 6/7/25; Canon EOS R6 Mark II; RF24-105 @ 65mm; ISO 2000; f/16; 1/350 sec.

- **Mexico.** I made this image in Guanajuato, Mexico. The ring of light around the sun is an ice halo formed when sunlight refracts through millions of tiny, hexagonal ice crystals in high-altitude cirrus clouds. I tried different compositions and decided the best and most appropriate one was with the cross at Basilica de Nuestra Senora de Guanajuato in the foreground.

Technical Data: 7/28/25; iPhone 16 Pro.

Second Leg:

United Kingdom

Norway (#99)

Denmark (#100)

Sweden (#101)

Finland (#102)

Estonia (#103)

Latvia (#104)

Lithuania (#105)

Austria (#106)

Italy (#107)

San Marino (#108)

Slovenia (#109)

Croatia (#110)

Bosnia &

Herzegovina (#111)

Montenegro (#112)

Albania (#113)

Kosovo (#114)

North Macedonia (#115)

Serbia (#116)

Vatican City (#117)

Moldova (#118)

Cyprus (#119)

Ireland (#120)



The Global Adventures (So Far) of Paul Shimek (5 of 5).

Photo Legend for Paul Shimek's Travel Photos, Photo/Map Layout, 2 of 2 (clockwise):

- **England.** Westward view of Big Ben and Westminster Bridge after sunset.
Technical Data: 8/17/25; iPhone 16 Pro.
- **England.** Royal Horse Guard in Whitehall, London, England.
Technical Data: 8/18/25; iPhone 16 Pro.
- **England.** As I exited the train at London Underground Station, I saw this view of The Shard, a 95-story skyscraper and tallest building in Western Europe. After I composed and took the first shot, I noticed the plane flying directly into the scene, and I waited for the decisive second shot. The plane flew past The Shard without incident.
Technical Data: 8/13/25; iPhone 16 Pro; converted to monochrome in post.
- **Italy.** I was hiking around the countryside of Castleruth, Italy in the Dolomites, when I came across these farm cats admiring the sunset.
Technical Data: 9/28/25; iPhone 16 Pro.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina.** It snowed the four nights I was there. Sarajevo, was one of my favorite cities in the Balkans. It snowed the four nights I was there, and this photo is of the minaret of the Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque, behind a snow-covered tree at night.
Technical Data: 11/27/25; iPhone 16 Pro.
- **Slovenia.** I came across this scene while driving along the Soča River near Trenta, Slovenia, south of the Julian Alps. It was toward the end of the fall color season in that area. I maneuvered my camera to frame the distant patch of red & orange trees within the moss-covered tree limbs in the foreground to present a contrast in colors.
Technical Data: 10/26/25; iPhone 16 Pro.
- **Italy.** Street scene at night with Christmas lights on Via di Ripetta near Piazza del Popolo in Rome, Italy. I set up low to the ground and waited for people to walk into the scene from the right.
Technical Data: 12/4/25; iPhone 16 Pro.

Use of the “Other” Vignetting Tool Setting.



I planned earlier this month to run an article on the “other” vignetting setting that I rarely see used in our club competitions and other website photos. When researching Mike Moat’s new business flower photography article, I found the perfect example of vignetting’s “other” setting.

Why are we talking about vignetting used on this flower? Almost all the vignetting I see in our competitions and on the web use the vignetting tool to darken the edges and

borders. In **Mike Moat’s** photo, he went the other way: feathering the edges with a soft fade and lightening the edges. BTW, high-key flowers are perfect for the lighter vignette setting.

Photography Basics Overview and a Plan To Progress.



First the good news: **Will Barron** runs through the basics in an easy-to-understand manner. No fluff here.

Now the just-be-aware news: The presentation goes at a rapid pace but really does cover the basics.

Tie this video (and other equally good presentations) with

practice and you’re on your way. Watch Will’s 31:54 video [here](#).

Next steps to consider are to:

- Watch our monthly Zoom *Continuing Education* meetings.
- Take part in our monthly field trips.
- Have fun with our quarterly learning workshops.
- Have fun with our monthly photo challenges.
- When you’re ready, compete in our club’s competition as a Novice photographer.
- As a member of CPS, raise your hand anytime [here](#) if you’d like assistance. We’ll be happy to set up a meeting with a fellow club mentor to help you get started. To go further, we have club members, for a fee, who offer one-on-one or classes.

Like any other skill, practice will sharpen your photographic skills.

Featured Website: DPG Masters Competition 2025.

“Dive Photo Guide (DPG) is proud to announce the winners of the DPG Masters Underwater Imaging Competition 2025. The contest invited submissions to nine image categories and one video category, and more than 2,000 entries were received from underwater photographers and filmmakers from around the world.”

Here’s the grand winner in a larger format (below). It’s even better at the website.

You can visit the website [here](#).



Yuka Takahashi
Synchronized Humpback Whales

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 - 2025

CPS editors: Pat Fahey and Margaret Waage