



Club Notes for December 2024

WISHING OUR MEMBERS A SAFE AND PHOTOGENIC HOLIDAY SEASON!

As noted in our last newsletter, “Wildlights” at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium runs through January 5, 5-9pm; Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens “Conservatory Aglow” also ends January 5; Butch Bando’s Fantasy of Lights at Alum Creek State Park Campgrounds (30 minute drive through holiday lights display) ends January 1; a new foot tour in downtown Columbus (Columbus Commons to Bicentennial Park down Town Street) called “Wanderlights” ends February 16; and, Dawes Arboretum Winter Wonders Walk is Dec 5 (members only), 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, and 21 from 6-9pm (reservations only).

Not Out of My Depth Anymore?

If you attended the November 18th competition night, you may have noticed that our judge, Erica Manning, mentioned “depth of field” as a significant feature in numerous images she critiqued, offering both positive and “constructive” points related to depth of field. In the club’s spirit of education and development, it seemed relevant to address this topic in our newsletter. If this turns out to be helpful, we can dive into some other skill set topics in the future. So, here is some information to chew on.

What is depth of field, anyway?

Essentially, depth of field is a compositional feature of photography concerning the range in lens-to-subject distances where elements in an image appear sharp and in focus, as opposed to where elements outside that range appear blurred in differing degrees. Depth-related terms describe depth of field: “shallow” refers to a narrow range of focus and “deep” refers to a wide range.

Macro and telephoto photographers typically work with “shallow” depth of field compared to landscape and architectural photography, often characterized by “deep” depth of field. Portraits and tablescapes vary in their use of depth of field but lean towards the “shallow” end.

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What factors determine depth of field?

Four major factors help determine how depth of field works in your images: (1) lens characteristics, (2) f/stop or aperture, (3) distance between lens and subject, and (4) distance between subject and background.

1. Let’s start with lens characteristics. Deep depth of field is a gift of wide-angle lenses: think low focal length numbers like 17-24mm. Low focal length means deep depth of field at the expense of magnification. This is why it is a great lens for wide scenes like large group shots, architecture, and landscapes where the aim is to keep all or most of the elements in an image equally in focus. Telephoto lenses have much higher focal length numbers, like 400mm or 600mm, and higher magnification. However, high magnification comes at the cost of a shallow depth of field. While the central subject may be sharply in focus, that begins to fall away around the subject or, with larger “deeper” subjects, the rest of the subject begins to blur. The magnification power of telephoto lenses makes them helpful for wildlife, sports,

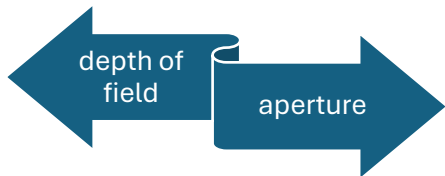
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(Depth of Field, continued)

and event photography where the photographer remains at a distance from the subject. Portrait photography seems ideal in a happy medium around 80-100mm focal length range. Portrait subjects typically allow a photographer to approach much closer to fill a frame than subjects that require telephoto lenses. Macro lenses are a special class, designed to maintain sharp details where the photographer is very close to the subject—their minimal focal distances are much shorter, and their magnification ratios are greater than for other lenses. For example, a 105mm micro/macro lens will shoot differently than a zoom lens set at 100mm or 105mm. The macro lens will capture more detail sharply defined. In summary, a longer focal length generally provides less depth of field than a shorter focal length.

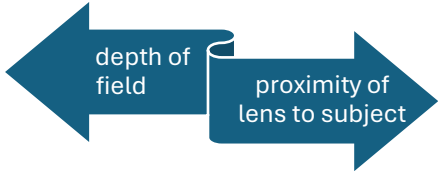


2. Next, we can visit the impact of aperture (a.k.a. f/stop) on depth of field. Large apertures (a.k.a. small f/stop numbers like f/4 or f/2.8) allow a lot of light to reach the camera sensor at the cost of limiting us to shallow depth of field. On the other hand, small apertures (a.k.a. large f/stop numbers like f/32 or f/40) allow greater depth of field, but less light reaches the sensor. In summary, increasing aperture makes depth of field shallower (but offers more light) and decreasing aperture deepens depth of field (but you will need more light). Shallow depth of field means the subject can be in sharp focus with foreground and background out of focus.

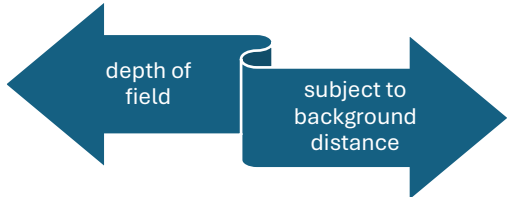


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3. Third, consider the impact of distance between the lens and subject. The closer you place the lens in relation to the photographic subject, the narrower your depth of field. Deeper depth of field happens as the distance between lens and subject is extended. (Thus, the beauty of a macro lens—it helps preserve depth of field at a short distance from the subject.)



4. Finally, depth of field can help or complicate an image, depending on how far the subject sits from its background. If a subject is up against the background, the background is more in focus. When a subject is situated a long distance from their background, the background becomes blurred, allowing the subject to stand out from the background. This is what creates soft bokeh—a word that was asked about in one of our earlier meetings. Bokeh refers to “blur” in a photograph’s background.



Depth of field & your creative intent
The story you wish to tell with your image is supported (or confounded) by the way you handle depth of field. This is demonstrated in some of the images from our November digital competition (see Zenfolio folders).

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(Depth of Field, continued)

For example, the distance between subject and a disappearing background (soft bokeh) idea is demonstrated in the Intermediate/Advanced Division images “Little Insomniac” (Cherry Williams) and “Violet Sabrewing Showering” (Audrey Begun), as well as Master Division’s “Chain” (Frank Begun). Small aperture giving deep depth of field is demonstrated in Intermediate/Advanced Division “Under the Boardwalk” (Cheri Brent)—f/1.6 was used here. Use of a wide-angle lens in deep depth of field landscape images is demonstrated in the Intermediate/Advanced Division “Reclining Nude Dune” (Bill Arneson used a 24.7mm setting) and Master Division “Green River Overlook” (Dale Berlin used a 16mm lens). Erica Manning commented on the terrific use of depth of field applied in Master Division photographs “Dandelion Details” (Rick Bartelt, Intermediate/Advanced Division photographs “Playground Memories” (Sharon Andrews) and “What’s Google Say” (Marcy Colucci), and Beginner Division photographs “Mums in the Rain” (Molly Selan), “The Sunrise Band” (David Troyer), and “Park City Flip” (Greg Chatfield). Many of the November images use depth of field in a creative manner; these are images for which the November judge mentioned depth of field in her verbal critiques. Read through her written feedback on many of the digital images—they are quite informative!

Where did this information come from?

This write-up is a compilation of information gleaned from Audrey Begun’s notes on lessons learned from: Annalise Kaylor (Photographing Birds in Flight lecture and in-person lessons), Jared Lloyd (*PhotoWild*, his podcasts, and in-person lessons), Joel Sartore (*The Great Course: Fundamentals of Photography*), Adobe’s *An Introduction to Shallow Depth of Field* (adobe.com), Steve Perry (Birds in Flight Photography lecture), and Jeff Sager (Introduction to Landscape Astrophotography lecture).

Discussing and maybe demonstrating depth of

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field principles might be an informative use of “print judging” time in the future?

***If you found this newsletter item to be helpful, we can develop more stories addressing other photography topics and techniques—just let Audrey Begun and John Butterfield know of your interests.

Educational Programs

Our Educational Committee scheduled **Erica Manning** for our December 2nd educational program. This presentation is titled “**Creative Lighting with Erica Manning.**” It promises to be an active learning experience with a live model and a real-time lighting demonstration. You may remember meeting Erica during our November competition as she judged and critiqued our work. Learn more about her on her website at <https://ericamanningphoto.com/>.

Another non-meeting zoom presentation has been arranged by Skip Kremer. **Annalise Kaylor** will explore “Finding Your Visual Voice” on **December 11th at 7pm.** Here is information adapted from the Chagrin Valley Camera Club (CVCC) newsletter—our co-hosts for this event—and expanded on by Audrey Begun from personal interactions with Annalise.

Annalise Kaylor is a wildlife photographer and conservation photojournalist whose work has taken her on assignments to 39 countries (and counting). With an emphasis on documentary photography, Annalise’s photo and video work has been seen in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Audubon Magazine*, and the *Associated Press*, as well as *PBS*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, *Great Big Story*, and the *Discovery Channel*. She also partners with NGOs and non-profits, including The Nature Conservancy,

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charity:water, and Habitat for Humanity International.

Annalise's work has been exhibited in galleries throughout North and South America, and her photographs are part of the permanent collections of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations. Her work is also part of the year-long *Planet Ocean* exhibit at the Oberhausen Gasometer in Germany.

Annalise is the co-creator of the *PhotoWILD* podcast which braids together the art and science of wildlife photography (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-photowild-podcast/id1681114259>), and a writer for the publication of the same name. She has recently completed a series of trainings to become certified in wilderness rescue, which she believes is an important skill set given the remote places where she works and takes others to photograph wildlife. She is a frequent invited presenter at national photographic conferences and with community-based photography groups. Annalise has a strong commitment to educating others about photography, conservation, and the various subjects she has documented.

When not hunkered down in her floating blind, leading photography workshops, or working behind the lens, Annalise can be found birdwatching (she is chipping away at her "lifers" list), hiking with her dog Susan, kayaking, and playing strategy board games (Wingspan, anyone?). If your interests lie in wildlife (especially birds), conservation-related, or photojournalism photography, you are likely to enjoy the images on her website and might want to take a peek at the photo workshops she hosts.

(<https://www.annalisekaylor.com/>).

Finding Your Visual Voice (from Annalise Kaylor)

If someone were to ask you what your style of photography is, could you describe it? When you look at your images, are they distinctly yours? Or are they replicas of images other photographers have created over the years?

Virtually every time I ask photographers about their style, the response starts with something technical. Their sense of photographic style is

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appropriated by the "what" more than anything else. The answer usually includes something about how they post-process their images, like their preference for a clean edit, their use of HDR, or a preset they created to overlay all images in their portfolio.

Thinking about photography at this superficial level holds back many otherwise talented photographers. It binds photographers to constantly changing their technical style to keep up with trends. The problem with this approach to finding your style is reliance on the superficial concept of "style" to make the photograph engaging.

Taking your photography to the next level isn't only about refining technical skills. *Finding Your Visual Voice* is designed to get you reflecting about why you are a photographer, what you most want your images to communicate, and what your photographs say about you and your work.

***The zoom link will be circulated and posted on the Westbridge Camera Club website a bit closer to the presentation date.

Additional Opportunities

Club Vice President John Butterfield hosted a Photo Feedback group session November 13th. Nine members participated with each of us sharing two images—digital and/or print. The consensus was that the feedback was helpful and interesting. A number of the images appeared as entries in the November competition! John has arranged the next group feedback session for Thursday January 9th from 7-8:30 in Meeting Room B of the Westerville Public Library located at 126 S. State Street.

Note: The feedback group is limited to 15 participants at each session—RSVP to jbutter@columbus.rr.com. Each

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participant brings one print and/or sends John a digital image to present for constructive feedback from fellow club members. (Two submissions may be invited if the group is small.)

Club Competition Notes

December's monthly competition is themed: Intentional Camera Movement (ICM). The competition will be judged by Kim Webb. Kim self-describes as a visual artist, community arts organizer, and educator interested in human behavior, social constructs, and absurdity, as well as environmental and social justice, ecology, and material studies. Kim's work is self-described as primarily collaborative, interdisciplinary/mixed media, and experimental—a great foundation for judging ICM images. You can learn more about our judge from the article <https://www.columbusmakesart.com/artist/6568-kim-webb> The deadline for uploading digital images to Zenfolio or sending to Carol Shurlow is 10 pm Monday December 9th in preparation for our Monday December 16th competition meeting where prints will be judged and results of digital judging will be presented.

The January competition is loosely themed: Taken in 2024. The judge will be Eric Albrecht.

Special Event Notes

Westbridge Camera Club 2024 Holiday Party is scheduled for **TUESDAY December 10th** from **6:30-8:30pm**. Dick Woods has arranged the event to take place at Heritage Condominiums located at 123 Lafayette Dr. in Westerville. The club will provide smoked brisket; everyone is requested to bring (1) your own beverage and (2) a potluck appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share. Optionally, if you would enjoy participating in the white elephant gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift at or under \$10 value (no gag gifts, please). Members are invited to bring a guest. Tonay Sekerak is coordinating the reservations—please **RSVP at tsekerak@yahoo.com or (614)893-0731 before December 4th** and include how many will be attending. Volunteers to help cleanup are welcome (we must vacate by 9pm).

Pre-Meeting Dinner Meet-Ups

A group of club members meet for dinner prior to the club's Monday night meetings. Connect with Jim Urzykowski to find out where the next meet-up will take place and let him know so they can reserve a seat. Jim can be texted at 614-935-8703.

Member News & Updates

This portion of the newsletter is reserved for announcements related to specific club members—we wish to acknowledge one another's successes and achievements, as well as other significant events. None were noted for December, but if we missed any, please let us know to add the update for January.

Audrey Begun and John Butterfield encourage club members to submit ideas or actual article drafts for inclusion in future newsletters. Please submit items and ideas to audrey.begun@gmail.com or jbutter@columbus.rr.com and let us know if there is an interest in more feature articles like the one on depth of field presented this month. We'd love to continue tapping into club members' expertise and experience in creating newsletter pieces.