



Club Notes for December 2025

WINTER IS PERFECT FOR PHOTOGRAPHY!

As the fall season fades into winter, the temptation is to burrow into our nests and caves. It is an ideal time to clean up and organize our photo files, perhaps catch up on editing the billion shots we made over the past year. But it is also a wonderful season for capturing some new images (not just a form of procrastination about organizing and editing chores). Perhaps you can start exploring indoor photographic opportunities—museums, markets, botanical gardens, indoor architecture, cultural performances, and so much more to consider. It might also be a time to explore opportunities for developing your “eye”—maybe visit some photographic and other art exhibits, see what is available in our rich library system (art is in the 700’s, photography is in the 770s), and maybe find some cool art education/appreciation resources on the internet (try looking into the many available Open Education Resources/OERs—search OER Commons, OERu, WikiEducator, OpenWA Art Group Resources, Ohio State University’s Knowledge Bank or OASIS search or U.OSU, Ohio Open Ed Collaborative/OOEC, COTC Open Educational Resources, and so many more options). This might be a good time to try Midwest Photo’s Learning Studio classes (see <https://mpexlearningstudio.com/events/>). Of course, wintertime outdoor photography opportunities abound, as well. The Columbus Zoo’s Wildlights runs from November 21-January 4. I experienced a preview leaving my volunteer shift—millions of lights on trees and other structures, beautiful arches, laser lights over the lake, scheduled shows and Santa visits, special tours. As noted in our November newsletter watch the Cincinnati Zoo, Indianapolis Zoo, and Toledo Zoo holiday light schedules, along with Franklin Park Conservatory Aglow, Dawes Arboretum’s Winter Wonders Walks, Butch Bando’s Fantasy of Lights (Alum Creek State Park Campgrounds), Wanderlights (Downtown Columbus), and many more events. Hocking Hills, Hayden Run Falls, and Highbanks have opportunities for frozen water and, perhaps, winter wildlife. Many parks offer winter activity photo ops (like sledding and ice skating). Just dress for the conditions (consider crampons for your boots, gloves with photo-friendly fingertips) and pack equipment for winter shooting (pro tip: camera batteries drain faster in cold weather). Also, see the story below about our winter holiday club party!

When Is Your Photo Not Your Photo?

This is a story by Frank and Audrey Begun about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in photography. It is a beginners’ study as we try to become informed about what AI means for our own photographic endeavors. It also offers a few considerations for our club competitions down the line. As photographers, it is important for each of us to become aware of when we are using AI and to be sure we are using it with intent. We have a love-hate relationship with AI—it often intrudes in our text messages with unsolicited and grossly unhelpful word edits, but it also makes Google searches easier and

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(AI In Photography continued)

faster. But, when the topic of AI-altered images being disallowed in many national and international competitions arises, Frank starts frantically pacing the room. We were surprised to learn the extent to which we unintentionally use AI tools in our own photographic work and wanted to share with club members what we have been finding out. Sources used in developing this story are cited at the end. First, we found it helpful to consider a continuum here:

AI generated ↔ AI assisted ↔ raw human generated

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<i>(AI In Photography continued)</i> It's a continuum because many human generated images might have an AI assist; and, we need to consider how much post-processing is facilitated by AI. Here we are mostly interested in the right half of this continuum ("right" being both a complicated belief in what is the "right" thing to do and in the "right" side of the diagram). We are not addressing completely AI generated art. AI algorithms are informed by what is learned from scanning millions upon millions of images (more on this as an ethical issue later). We start here with how AI may be incorporated into capturing images, then we look at how it might influence post-processing tasks. <u>In-Camera AI</u> Advanced, newer digital cameras and lenses may have options for "computational photography" built into their systems. These are designed to assist photographers in managing technical details that many of us have spent years learning to master. For example, scene recognition settings like "portrait" or "landscape" encourage the camera to manage exposure, focus, ISO, white balance, and possibly other settings based on its AI analysis of what exists in the camera's field of view. AI is engaged when you turn on autofocus and subject or motion tracking tools—it computes a predicted path of movement based on real-time trajectory and speed of an AI-identified subject. Exposure and lighting presets (e.g., aperture priority, shutter priority, auto ISO, auto white balance), as well as recent developments in Through-The-Lens (TTL) flash mode, use AI to determine what the camera (or flash) believes are optimal settings for a variety of image types. Image stabilization features are increasingly AI-driven in newer equipment. A great deal of HDR (high dynamic range) and image/photo stacking is AI-driven, as well. AI may be involved in some low-light/night photography: stacked images based on a burst of multiple images being combined to increase brightness. Modern cell phones have a variety of AI-based photo apps available; <i>(continued in next column)</i>	<i>(AI In Photography continued)</i> AI directs the setting options in your images unless you use manual settings. Michael Hodgson's article on AI in <i>PhotoWild</i> also describes cameras with "deep learning," adaptive shooting style capabilities tailored to a particular photographer's habits. Consider our initial question and your own comfort level in creating your images—how comfortable are you with turning over to AI <i>versus</i> managing your camera settings? The crux of this matter is your comfort level with how much you are shooting manually <i>versus</i> using AI-automated functions. AI has certainly made photography a lot more fun: we see a much greater percentage of shots that are pleasing. But we often find ourselves arguing with the camera about the choices it made for us, too. Furthermore, our ethics position (and global lawsuits) challenges the AI-industry's use of photographers' images in training AI algorithms—uses that violate copyright and fair use practices. With some cloud storage and image marketing applications, we may be granting permission for use of our images in the AI training process. Thus, we continue our love-hate relationship with AI. <u>Post-Processing AI</u> Westbridge Camera Club faced a dilemma back in 2009 when we first joined: competitions used slides. Slide film was not alterable in the same ways that digital images are—images were creative representations of reality. Soon, digital became a medium for competitions and manual alterations became possible. Now, we face a similar paradigm shift: to what extent is AI further pushing the envelope, when is an AI post-processed image no longer the photographer's sole work, and when does it matter? Loving AI-powered post-processing includes its ability to speed up menial retouching tasks such as removing dust spots from an image. AI-incorporated routines also allow <i>(continued on next page)</i>
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<i>(AI In Photography continued)</i> photographers to expand their creativity in novel directions. With AI support, we can easily make global improvements in our images (e.g., sharpening, denoise, and shadow, highlight, or color adjustments). Better yet, AI-facilitated tools allow fine-tuning in select portions of an image (e.g., using select object or sky or background strategies). Making such additions and subtractions can greatly enhance an image's appeal. On the other hand, consider how AI works. <i>Manually applied</i> cloning, sharpening, and other adjustments draw from pixels within the image being worked. Or a photographer can incorporate elements from another image in their own personal image library. Many AI-facilitated post-processing tools replace pixels captured in the original raw image with pixels drawn from the AI-verse (that universe of images used to train AI algorithms). Stop a moment and think about that—How many of those AI-introduced pixels does it take before the image is no longer <i>YOUR</i> image? AI is integral to many post-processing software packages our members love to use. For example, Photoshop and Lightroom have both manual (Filter menu, Sharpen or Denoise) and AI-generative options (Filter AI Sharpen or Filter AI Denoise) for similar actions, with not necessarily similar results. Topaz Sharpen and Denoise programs are entirely AI-driven tools. DxO PhotoLab uses AI in many of its applications, as do other post-processing resources. With mixed results, some club members report consulting ChatGPT for help in titling their images. <u>AI In Club Competition</u> Our club competition rules state: <i>"All elements of the photograph must be from photos taken by the member, in other words the member created every element of the image. No AI generated elements or stock photos are permitted. There are no limits on standard processing and editing. Composites and photographic artistic expression are</i> <i>(continued in next column)</i>	<i>(AI In Photography continued)</i> <i>acceptable.</i>" This is where our discomfort again arises. Where do we draw the line between "standard" and AI-assisted photo processing, for example—especially considering that point about AI pixel substitution? An individual photographer's comfort level with their own images depends on their purpose: creating an image or creative artwork for personal display <i>versus</i> submitting an image for competition, marketing, or retail sale, for example. Our recent conversations with two Professional Photographers of America (PPA) members, image contest competitors, and judges (Annalise Kaylor and Michael Hodgson) indicate that photo image selling sites and national/international competitions increasingly disallow AI-assisted photographs. They do not need to rely on a photographer's description; AI use appears in the metadata of many formats, and many competitions require submission of both raw/unaltered and finished images together. This story is intended to begin conversation and understanding about how AI is involved in our work. We are wondering how this all relates to club activities and competition, especially given the likelihood that AI will continue to develop in the photography world. We want to support club members' growth and development in the real world of AI-assisted photography while at the same time retaining integrity in our club competitions. Engaging in a conversation might be an interesting educational enterprise. <u>Sources consulted:</u> --General Rules of Competition, (https://westbridgecc.com/aws/WBCC/asset_manager/get_file/929542?ver=3) --Hodgson, M. (summer, 2024). AI in wildlife photography. <i>PhotoWild</i>, p. 35-46. --Pestano, D. (Jan 24, 2024). AI in photography—The good, the bad and the ugly. Professional Photo Online https://professionalphoto.online/ai-artificial-intelligence/ai-in-photography-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/
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Club Competition News

Our club's December competition theme is "Profound Isolation." Digital image submissions are due in Zenfolio or emailed to Carol Shurlow (shurlowc751@gmail.com) by 10:00 pm, Monday December 8th (the night of our holiday party, by the way). Images should be placed in the category selected during prior competitions this year (Novice, Intermediate/Advanced, or Master). Bring your mounted monochrome and/or color prints to the competition judging on December 15th. Our Competition Committee has arranged with Laura Dark, M. Photog, CPP to serve as our December judge. She is an award-winning, internationally acclaimed photographer, known for her exceptional ability to capture the extraordinary. As a Certified Professional Photographer and Master of Photography through the Professional Photographers of America (PPA), and a proud member of the Professional Photographers of Ohio, Laura brings nearly 30 years of expertise to her craft. She specializes in conceptual and portrait photography. Laura Dark's impressive portfolio has earned numerous accolades, including 2023 Photographer of the Year, Fine Art Photographer of the Year, and United States Photographer of the Year titles on OneEyeLand.com. She also secured the 2024 WeddingRule Editor's Choice Award for Boudoir Photography. Notably, Laura was a standout contestant on the YouTube photography reality show *The Creator Series* hosted by Sal Cincotta. There she impressively came in as a runner up among 10 contestants. Her portfolio can be viewed at <https://lauradark.net/portfolio/>.

Looking ahead to January, the competition theme is "Taken in 2025." Start reviewing your year in retrospect to identify your favorites.

December Education Program

Our December 1st education program is a presentation by none other than our own Rob Formentelli. Rob's presentation, titled "Characteristics of Light," introduces fundamental physical properties of light,

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including brightness, color temperature, contrast, and direction. He also illustrates how these factors influence the mood and perception conveyed in images. The presentation explores how light interacts with various materials through transmission, absorption, and reflection, explaining key reflection types (diffuse, direct/specular, and polarized). Additionally, core lighting principles (Family of Angles, Inverse Square Law) are demonstrated to show how light placement and distance impact our images. The presentation emphasizes the ways that effective lighting in photography involves observing, anticipating, and controlling reflections to shape subjects' appearances.

Photo Feedback Interest Group Update

John Butterfield has announced the next photo feedback interest group session. The third of the club season is scheduled for Monday January 12th 1:00 to 3:15 pm at the Old Worthington Library's Meeting Room, 820 High Street, Worthington 43085. Interested members should register by email with John at jbutter47@gmail.com before noon on Friday January 9th (first come, first reserved). Participation is limited to 15 club members and open to all skill levels. Photo Feedback sessions provide a relaxed, fun, peer-group atmosphere for receiving and delivering constructive feedback on one another's print or digital images. We tap into the expertise and experiences of fellow club members in these sessions, as well as getting to know each other a little better. Each participant may present up to 2 images, digital (due preferably by noon Saturday January 10th) and/or as matted prints. Many of the shared images have subsequently received recognition in our club competitions!

Member Suggested Opportunities

This is a reminder of Kathryn Cubert's announcement concerning the photo contest and exhibition called "Our Nature in Focus." This opportunity is hosted by Midwest Photo

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(Midwest/Audubon contest continued) and Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC). The contest and exhibition celebrate the beauty in our Columbus Metro Parks. The entry period is November 1-December 15, 2025 with the exhibition dates being February 5-March 29, 2025. There will be an award reception on February 5th (6:00-7:30pm) at the GIAC where winners will be announced. There are two entry categories to consider for up to 3 entries per photographer: Adult Professional (\$15) and Adult Amateur (\$10). Note that submissions must be taken at any of the Columbus Metro Parks. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes in each category include up to \$800, Canon Pro 200S, membership to the GIAC, swag bags from Columbus Metro Parks, or a Midwest Photo gift card. In addition to Midwest Photo and the GIAC, sponsors include Canon, Fotospeed, and Columbus Metro Parks. Exhibitions Update Twenty-five members are exhibiting their photographs at our club exhibition at the Upper Arlington Library Tremont Branch (2800 Tremont Road). Our exhibition runs through December 20. Library hours are Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 10am to 5pm, and Sunday 1-5pm. The 31 prints are located in library's main exhibit space, off the atrium on the main floor, and other areas in the library. Exhibited images were attracting attention even as they were being hung in the library! The collection features landscapes, nature, wildlife, portraits, and abstract prints in color and monochrome. Participating members and their images are: • Cheri Brent, <i>Under the Boardwalk – Cocoa Beach, Florida</i> • John Butterfield, <i>A Good Day's Catch & Making Music</i> • Carrie Cartwright, <i>How does perceiving stillness of a tree make you still?</i> • Mark Collins, <i>Valley Sun</i> • Sue Day, <i>Pacific Blues & Measure Twice, Cut Once</i> (continued in next column)	(UA Library Exhibit continued) • Phil Edelsberg, <i>Inversion</i> • Todd Elzey, <i>Sci-Fi Plasma Power</i> • Joyce Fasone, <i>Eyes Over Shanghai</i> • Lee Flasche, <i>Sandusky's Boy & The Boot</i> • Mark Fohl, <i>Monet's Lilies & Wine in the Window</i> • Robert Formentelli, <i>Ocean Motion Sunrise & Silver and Spice</i> • Phyllis Hollifield, <i>Solitary Grace & Unfolding Grace</i> • Roberta Kayne, <i>Hamnøy Snow Scene, Hamnøy, Norway</i> • Larry Kennedy, <i>Raindrops on a Rose</i> • Whit Martin, <i>Mushroom Garden #2</i> • Steve Organ, <i>Egret, O'Shaughnessy Nature Preserve & Lighthouse, St Andrew's, New Brunswick</i> • Jeff Sagar, <i>Lake Superior Breakwater Barrier</i> • Molly Selan, <i>Lavender Dreams</i> • Carol Shurlow, <i>Hens and Chicks</i> • Sharon Telatnik, <i>Umbrella Girl at Schiller Park</i> • David Troyer, <i>Twisted Metal</i> • Linda Ulasiewicz, <i>New Beginnings</i> • Tom Wehrung, <i>Self-Portrait</i> • Cherry Williams, <i>Story Hour</i> • Dick Wood, <i>Westside Stair</i> The club's Exhibit Committee (John Butterfield, Joyce Fasone, and Steve Organ) arranged the show. Other exhibits scheduled for this season are Bexley Library, January 10-February 28 (see details below), and the Westerville Community Center, July 1-July 31. Details will be provided soon. Future exhibits are confirmed for the High Road Gallery in Worthington and The Riffe Center in 2026-2027, as well as Columbus Audubon in 2028-2029. Want to create a broader awareness of your photography and reach potential buyers? Take advantage of a Westbridge Club member benefit and sign up for the club's (continued on next page)
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exhibit, arranged by the Club's Exhibit Committee (John Butterfield, Joyce Fasone, & Steve Organ) at the Bexley Library from January 10-February 28. To participate, notify John Butterfield jbutter47@gmail.com. Space is limited to about 25 framed prints—participants will be selected in sign-up order. The Bexley Library is located at 2411 East Main Street. Library hours are Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday & Saturday 10 am-6pm, and Sunday 1pm-5pm.

Club Holiday Party

This year's holiday gathering will take place on **Monday December 8th starting at 6:30pm** at the Heritage Condominium Clubhouse located at 123 Lafayette Drive, Westerville (thanks to Dick Wood for this opportunity). The event is a potluck gathering (bring appetizer, side dish, or dessert, as well as your beverage of choice, and please wear your name badge). The club will provide smoked brisket, vegetarian mac & cheese, vegetarian baked beans, plates, cutlery, napkins, and cups. **Please RSVP as soon as possible (but before December 3rd) to Tonya Sekerak (tsekerak@yahoo.com or 614.893.0731)** with the number who will attend so that we can place the order with City BBQ. For added fun, you may opt in to the white elephant exchange by bringing a wrapped approximately \$15 gift to swap with others (not "gag" gifts, they disappoint). You are welcome to bring a guest. This social event involves no speakers or presentations, just a social gathering among club members.

Member News

Congratulations to Joyce Fasone who has a solo show of her photography at the Front Porch Guild in Granville. The Front Porch Guild is an artist collective offering their work for sale and sharing studio space. The opening event is December 6th from 4-6 pm during the annual Granville Candlelight Walking Tour. Their address is 124 South Main, Granville and their hours are 12-5 Wednesday to Saturday. The Guild website identifies Joyce's exhibit as "Glimpses," fine

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photography featuring a unique perspective from her travels around the world.

News of long-time club member Neal Piek's passing was shared with members in October. His obituary notes that Neal was a kind, gentle man whose smile lit up a room. He loved travel, wine tasting, and photography. He shared his documentary photos and stories with club members, especially trains, airplanes, and covered bridges he photographed with club member Angela Scavo-Manno (ascavo1@yahoo.com). The club has sponsored a tree planted in Neal's memory.

Club Newsletters

A sneak preview of our planned December newsletter: Results from the brief survey many of you completed in November about your image storing systems. Our club newsletters are developed by the Communications team based on information shared by club members. As always, the Communications team invites you to send information and newsletter ideas to Audrey Begun (audrey.begun@gmail.com) and John Butterfield (jbutter47@gmail.com).

