



## Club Notes for February 2026

February, a time when one might wonder, "What am I supposed to do with my camera in the dead of winter???" It might be a chance to take your gear for routine maintenance since local service and repair centers usually have you leave it for a spell. Instead of shooting new materials, it might be a chance to review your inventory—you might find treasures that you forgot you had. A review might help you develop a wish list for future shoots or a plan for re-shooting subjects you want to try again. You might tackle online lessons or books from the library that have something new to teach you about photography, places to photograph, or post-processing techniques. There are still plenty of outdoors photographic opportunities all around Central Ohio—or wherever you go to escape winter in Ohio.

### Photography Tour Considerations

You might be considering enrolling in a photography workshop or two this year. Our experiences with "professional-led" photo workshops have been mixed, from incredible to disappointing. This story addresses several topics to consider when committing your time and dollars to a photo workshop. It is not about classroom workshops; it is specifically about "field shooting" workshops. It is important to clarify the difference between a "tour" and "workshop" here, as well. As photographers, we have all experienced companions who get impatient with us while we wait for the right light or the right moment to capture a desired image. On a travel tour, the leaders and other guests are not likely to support this kind of behavior (shame on us). A photography workshop, on the other hand, is designed specifically for us! A photography workshop, on the other hand, is designed specifically for us! A well-led workshop puts us in the right places at the right times to capture fantastic images—and teaches us how to do better at this ourselves. Unfortunately, some photography workshops are more like tours, where we are taken to awesome spots but not assisted in making fantastic images or learning new photographic skills. This story provides a few lessons learned, some the hard way.

First, you might wonder, "Why bother?" It

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might seem preferable to travel on your own, relying on photography guidebooks, making your own discoveries of subjects, and applying your existing photography skill set. That strategy is often quite appropriate and satisfying. However, you might find yourself wanting to deepen your photography knowledge through hands-on educational workshops. The "right" workshop might introduce you to subjects that you would not discover on your own. In addition, you might enjoy the company of other photographers who are passionate about the subjects you want to tackle. In these cases, a photo workshop might be just the ticket. There are many things to consider before signing up.

**1. The Leader.** Many workshops are offered by fantastic photographers. However, being a fantastic photographer is no guarantee of being a fantastic educator. If possible, review the workshop leader's credentials and evaluations. If it is offered by a photography tour company rather than an individual, find out the company policy on and history of switching leaders. We recently had an unfortunate experience when we signed up for a wildlife photography workshop led by an outstanding wildlife photographer and educator. Weeks before the trip, we learned that a different leader had been assigned. This person was a

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<p><i>(Photo Workshops continued)</i></p> <p>landscape and portrait photographer, unfamiliar with the nuances of wildlife photography. He was also not a skilled photo educator. We had a great trip (thanks to the tour company), captured some awesome images, and made a new friend. However, the three most advanced photographers spent much of their time teaching the others and learned very little from the workshop themselves.</p>	<p><i>(Photo Workshops continued)</i></p> <p>wet/dry seasons. Dry seasons tend to be more travel- and photo equipment-friendly and have fewer biting insects. For example, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa are very different in June (wonderful) and “green” season (very wet in February). There are some risks, but also many rewards for “shoulder” season adventures. For example, mid-to-late May offers delightful photography experiences in the Great Smoky Mountains before the busy summer season. Do your research to help decide if a scheduled workshop is right for you.</p>
<p><b>2. Target Audience.</b> It is important to understand who the workshop is designed for and whether it is a good fit with your interests, skills, and physical capabilities. Many workshop leaders and companies spell this out in their advertising. They might specify beginner or advanced photographers (though many simply say “all levels” or beginner to advanced). They might describe the physicality by level (level 1 might be all from a safari vehicle, level 2 might involve hiking or harsh weather conditions, level 3 or higher is...well, tougher than me). Do an honest assessment of your abilities and do not hesitate to reach out to the leader or company to ask a lot of questions about this issue. We failed to do this for a local Ohio weekend workshop; it turned out to be designed for beginners and was not satisfactory for us as intermediate/advanced photographers familiar with our equipment. Camping out at The Wilds was fun, though.</p>	<p><b>4. Equipment Needs.</b> A landscape workshop involves very different lenses and filters than a wildlife workshop. Underwater photography uses different equipment than does astrophotography or street photography in a travel destination. Be sure to find out what is recommended so you don’t haul around unnecessary “stuff” and you have what serves the workshop learning objectives well. If you don’t own it, consider renting it. (Club members may be eligible for discounted rentals from Midwest Photo.) In some locations (like West Yellowstone), local camera stores might be a good option for rental gear rather than trying to travel with it. One of our favorite wildlife photo workshop companies offers free use of Canon equipment, including 100-600mm lens, during many of their workshops (see Pangolin Photo Safaris). This came in handy when baggage handlers destroyed my 100-400mm lens; I learned to switch from Nikon to Canon for that trip. Also consider your need for extension cords and converters at your travel destination(s). If your workshop is in cold weather, you may need more camera batteries than usual and/or higher capacity batteries. If it might be wet, consider different kinds of rain shields for your different-length lenses and waterproof covers for your carry bag.</p>
<p><b>3. Locale Offerings.</b> Do your background research about the location(s) to be visited during the workshop. This includes reviewing seasonal conditions and weather. For example, you should seriously consider whether to visit Caribbean countries during their “wet” or hurricane seasons, Asian-Pacific areas during typhoon or monsoon seasons, or southern Africa and Amazon basin countries during the rainy season. Remember that seasons are different in the Southern Hemisphere—while it is -9 here today, it is 95 in Rio—and many parts of the world don’t have summer/winter designations, they have</p>	<p><b>5. Cost &amp; Accommodations.</b> As with any trip, find out in advance exactly what is</p>

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<p><i>(Photo Workshops continued)</i></p> <p>covered and what is not in the workshop cost. Do some background research concerning accommodations provided by the tour company (transportation, room &amp; board, snacks, water). Carefully consider trip insurance options—the “all cause” kind can be expensive but may be critically important, depending on the risk level of your excursion. We learned about this during the Covid-era shut-downs and an airline pilots’ strike. We were glad we had it when a health issue trip led to a cancellation. It might help protect you if the leader or tour company goes out of business. It might or might not protect your investment in cases of international or diplomatic crisis. Find out about gratuities, too! Some workshops cover tipping of local guides but not the photo pro leading the workshop. Individual workshop leaders might or might not expect gratuity for their services. It is important to ask, to manage expectations, as well as finding out proper currency to carry for gratuities. (Hint: We have learned that US dollars are not always useful in remote areas because recipients cannot easily exchange them for local currency, especially if the bills are not fresh, crisp, and clean.) Look into your airline baggage requirements, limitations, and costs, as well. We have learned that regional companies in some countries charge differently than major international airlines (and sometimes require local currency).</p> <p><b>6. Safety Training.</b> Many photography workshops are held in well-populated areas where security and health services are available. Some of us travel to more remote areas of the US and other countries where this is not the case. It is important to learn not only about the security aspects of the shooting locale (political and crime concerns), but also about the accessibility of emergency health care should it become necessary. Ideally, the workshop leader and/or local guides have strong levels of training in providing emergency care in remote areas where it may be difficult to access. As SCUBA divers and underwater photographers, we always ensure</p> <p><i>(continued in next column)</i></p>	<p><i>(Photo Workshops continued)</i></p> <p>that a hyperbaric chamber is in close proximity to our diving locations and that local dive masters are trained in dive emergency care, just in case. Attention to this topic is particularly important if you travel to areas where communication is spotty. There exists certification, for example, as a Wilderness First Responder (WFR): someone specifically trained to handle medical emergencies in remote settings. While we have never needed this, it is reassuring to know our favorite workshop leader holds this certification (see <a href="https://www.annalisekaylor.com/">https://www.annalisekaylor.com/</a> ). Not only does she carry emergency medical supplies (she expertly splinted my sprained finger once), she also carries emergency communication tools that extend beyond cell phone limitations.</p> <p><b>7. Don’t Be “That Person.”</b> Finally, my friend Michael Hodgson helped edit this story and suggested adding a note about workshop manners (see <a href="https://hitraveltales.com/">https://hitraveltales.com/</a> ). Photography workshops are group experiences. As such, it makes a big difference when we remain kind, patient, and flexible with each other, our guides, and our workshop leaders. It matters when we contribute to positive group dynamics, during the “shoots,” travel, meals, and other interaction times. We each have our strengths, weaknesses, joys, and frustrations as photographers; we can help support and encourage each other without competing. We might even learn from each other. Respect and courtesy for the people and places we photograph goes without saying.</p> <p><b>February Education</b></p> <p>Our club education committee invited <b>Laura Dark, M. Photog, CPP</b> to present at our <b>February 2<sup>nd</sup></b> meeting. You might remember Laura from judging our December competition. As a Certified Professional Photographer and Master of Photography through the Professional Photographers of</p> <p><i>(continued on next page)</i></p>
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America (PPA), and a proud member of the Professional Photographers of Ohio, Laura specializes in conceptual and portrait photography. Her expertise is well suited to preparing for our April portrait competition.

In addition, Westbridge Camera Club is sponsoring a remote zoom presentation by [Herb Ascherman on Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm](#). Ascherman's talk will extend beyond technical aspects of portrait photography into the realm of the psychological. He will share his seasoned techniques for mastering hand positions, the nuances of posing, and—perhaps most importantly—the “Zen” of getting a model to relax, letting us capture their truest self. His presentation will also delve into the timeless advantages of black and white photography, exploring how removing color often reveals a deeper truth about the subject. Herb Ascherman is a prominent portrait photographer in Cleveland (see <https://aschermanphoto.net/>). His portfolio includes photos of four presidents and other international leaders, 750 Northern Plains Native Americans, Keepers of the Culture performers, Holocaust survivors, symphony orchestra players, Street Fair images, and a playful set he identifies as Greek gods and goddesses as they would appear today. His work includes a range of studio and street photography reflective of the varied artists list identified for April's theme. (See Competitions tab in our club website top bar menu and the January newsletter's Club Competition News story posted under the News menu for details about our April competition).

**Club Competition News**

Our club's February 16<sup>th</sup> competition theme is “Open.” Digital image submissions are due in Zenfolio or emailed to Carol Shurlow ([shurlowc751@gmail.com](mailto:shurlowc751@gmail.com)) by 10:00 pm, Monday [February 9<sup>th</sup>](#). Images should be placed in the category selected during prior competitions this year (Novice, Intermediate/Advanced, or Master). Bring your mounted or matted (no frames) monochrome and/or color

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prints to the competition judging on [February 16<sup>th</sup>](#). Our Competition Committee has arranged with [Vince Noble](#) to judge this month's competition. Vince serves as an adjunct instructor of photography at Columbus State Community College in the Digital Art, Media and Design Department. He shoots with an array of equipment including Nikon, Fuji, Sony, and DJI drone systems. He is a member of the Professional Photographers of America and has earned PPA's Certified Professional Photographer CPP-Commercial designation. Vince specializes in architectural photography (both interior and exterior), as well as product branding, art, and portrait photography. Vince's website (<https://vincentnobel.com/>) hosts a variety of images, including a collection called “lifestyle adventure.” Vince's website also describes local Ohio small group photography workshops that he offers. Vince has supported Westbridge Camera Club in the past, and we are happy to welcome him back again this season.

Our competition theme in March is “Shiny Objects” (judged by Alison Crocetta). April is themed “Portraits in the Style Of...” (judged by Bobbie Atlas and Ray Clark).

**Photo Feedback Interest Group**

John Butterfield has announced the next photo feedback interest group session. The fourth of the club season is scheduled for [Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 3:15 pm at the Worthington Park Library, 1389 Worthington Centre Dr, in the Worthington Park Centre](#). Interested members should register by email with John at [jbutter47@gmail.com](mailto:jbutter47@gmail.com) before noon on [Friday March 6<sup>th</sup>](#) (first come, first reserved, these meetings are filling up lately). 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

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<p><i>(Feedback Group continued)</i></p> <p>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 to John preferably by noon Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>) and/or as matted/mounted prints. Many of the shared images have subsequently received recognition in our club competitions!</p>	<p><i>(Opportunities continued)</i></p> <p>are not familiar with these learning opportunities, you may be in for a treat (see <a href="https://www.pvsfoundations.com/">https://www.pvsfoundations.com/</a> ). This online education event is a collection of 45 Photoshop classes taught by 16 Photoshop experts experienced at educating others about practical uses of Photoshop's many features. Foundations is designed for beginners or those wanting a refresh. Best of all, you can access them for free using the Free Pass option which opens each selected workshop for a limited time. Or you can purchase the VIP Pass (\$99 during early bird sale) to maintain lifetime access to the entire series. The program is offered by Dave Cross who delivers both Photoshop and Lightroom Virtual Summits. In addition to introductory lessons, the schedule includes topics like: Lightroom or Photoshop (or Both?), working non-destructively, layer basics, canvas and image size, saving files, Adobe Bridge for photographers, making selections, layer masks, brush work, cropping, basics of camera raw, filters, blending, and printing. You can click to download a PDF of the daily schedule on the main summit homepage to decide if this is for you and which sessions you want to attend.</p>
<p><b>Exhibitions</b></p> <p>The club's Exhibit Committee (John Butterfield, Joyce Fasone, and Steve Organ) arranged a club exhibit at the Bexley Library. The show continues through Saturday February 28, and features work from 29 club members. The library's gallery space is described as "somewhat quirky," with the prints hung in various places. The Bexley Library is located at 2411 East Main Street. Library hours are Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday &amp; Saturday 10 am-6pm, and Sunday 1pm-5pm.</p> <p>While not officially a Westbridge exhibition, numerous members have photographs appearing in the "Our Nature In Focus" exhibit from February 5<sup>th</sup>-March 29<sup>th</sup>. The exhibition (and contest) was co-sponsored by the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Midwest Photo. The exhibition celebrates the beauty residing in our Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks. Each entry was taken in one of these parks. There is an awards reception on February 5<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30 where winners will be announced in both the Professional and Amateur categories. We will post news in the March newsletter about club awards earned. But first we want to hear the titles of your print(s) included in the exhibit (send to <a href="mailto:audrey.begun@gmail.com">audrey.begun@gmail.com</a> and <a href="mailto:jbutter47@gmail.com">jbutter47@gmail.com</a> ).</p> <p><b>Member Noted Opportunities</b></p> <p>The 2026 Photoshop Virtual Summit: Foundations is scheduled from Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> – Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>. If you</p>	<p>Roberta Kane made me aware of the Out of Chicago Blog website. While the annual conference has a fee (\$300 for 2026) several presentations are posted on the blog site for free. Topics include floral and garden photography, long exposure, photographing food, bird and other wildlife photography, still life photos, intentional camera movement, double exposure, cityscapes, night photography, and others. Possibly the most relevant this month is titled "Keeping Creativity Alive During the Winter Months" with Tiffany Brotherton. Check out the site at <a href="https://www.outofchicago.com/blog/">https://www.outofchicago.com/blog/</a></p> <p>There are always learning opportunities listed for Midwest Photo's learning studio (the room where we meet as a club). See</p>

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what is being offered in February and March at <https://mpexlearningstudio.com/events/>.

### **Club Volunteers Needed**

Our club functions solely through volunteer effort—without volunteers the club cannot exist. Each year, at about this time, we urge members to consider joining the team for next year (work begins in May 2025 and continues through May 2026). Visit the club website in the About menu to see the list of our club Board Officers and committees. Please consider stepping up to become involved in one of these capacities. Tonya Sekerak and Audrey Begun assembled a detailed flow chart and timeline associated with each role to help guide volunteers through the season. In the About menu is a link to the club Bylaws—the duties of each position are described here. But, the best way to get an understanding of a role you might be interested in is to talk to the person(s) who are currently in the position. You can do it, you won't be doing it alone, and you have ideas and energy to contribute. To put your name in the hopper, email our current club President at [begunfrank@gmail.com](mailto:begunfrank@gmail.com). The leadership team will be meeting in late February/early March to formally initiate the volunteer recruitment process.

### **Club Newsletters**

As always, the Communications team invites you to send information and newsletter ideas to Audrey Begun ([audrey.begun@gmail.com](mailto:audrey.begun@gmail.com)) and John Butterfield ([jbutter47@gmail.com](mailto:jbutter47@gmail.com) ).

Please consider volunteering for the Communications team in 2026-2027. Audrey and John are happy to assist, but Audrey will be retiring from this role at the end of our season (May 2026).