



## Club Notes for April 2026

April is peak season for migratory birds in Ohio! Locally, many songbirds pass through Franklin County on their migration north and some decide to stick around. In addition to the local Metroparks, check out parks along the Scioto River, like Scioto Audubon in downtown Columbus, Quarry Trails, Griggs, Hayden Falls, Scioto, Kiwanis Riverway, and Emily Traphagen Parks. Spring wildflowers are an added bonus in these locations. A few key spots to consider traveling to are Magee Marsh Wildlife Area (<https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/magee-marsh-wildlife-area>), though it is often very crowded with photographers and birders during the spring migration. Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge is quieter complex of wetland, grassland, and forest habitats, located near Lake Erie between Toledo and Sandusky. The wildlife drive and trails are not open every day, so check their schedule (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/ottawa>). The Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society hosts spring bird walks mid-April to mid-May. Check out their website for a list of locations and dates/times (<https://www.wcaudubon.org/spring-bird-walk-locations.html>). If you wander as far northeast as Cleveland, consider visiting the Quilt Show Mar 27-April 19 9am-5pm Lake Metropark Farmpark (800 Euclid Chardon Rd, Kirtland, OH). Check out 200 quilted works (bed, wall art, apparel, and more) with feature demonstrations that may be interesting to photograph. A little further north is Presque Isle State Park (Erie, PA—not the ones in Maine or Michigan). In addition to the beautiful coastline beaches and sunsets, there is a photogenic lighthouse. Admission is free! Heading west instead? Take a look at the Indiana Birding Trail website: <https://indianabirdingtrail.com/>. Other than nature photography, the April Columbus Short North Gallery Hop is scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> with a host of street and performer photo opportunities every month. (See their website's "learn about our next gallery hop" link at <https://shortnorth.org/gallery-hop/>). In addition to Earth Day celebrations around Central Ohio (officially on April 22<sup>nd</sup> but events run the entire week), the Cherry Blossom Festival continues through April 25<sup>th</sup> at Franklin Park. If horses are more your speed, Equine Affaire runs April 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> at the Ohio Expo Center (<https://equineaffaire.com/events/ohio/>). If you are looking to get started with Adobe Lightroom, Midwest Photo's Learning Studio (where our club meetings are held) is offering a workshop called Adobe Lightroom Classic: Comprehensive Foundation & Workflow on April 4<sup>th</sup>. On April 7<sup>th</sup> they also kick off a three-part beginning photography workshop series—starting with Photo 101: Introduction to Photography. April 14<sup>th</sup> is Photo 102: Understanding Light, Focus & Color, workshop and April 21<sup>st</sup> is Photo 103: Editing & Post-Processing (visit <https://mpexlearningstudio.com/events/>). Lots of adventures await in this busy month.

### **Appeasing the Camera Gods**

In the spirit of April Fools' Day, I decided to go with a lighthearted opening story. It is a story Frank and I crafted together over the years concerning our history with the (sometimes fickle) camera gods. The story's theme is: The camera gods giveth and they taketh away. Many of you most likely have experienced this, too, even if you didn't recognize the phenomenon. In prepping for an outdoor photo session, you pack up the camera body,

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### *(Camera Gods continued)*

lenses, lighting equipment, memory chips (or film), extra batteries. You even remember bug spray and sunscreen. But have you checked your current status with the camera gods?

We first became aware of the camera gods over 30 years ago while SCUBA diving in the Galapagos. We captured memorable shots with our underwater Nikonos V camera and wide-angle lens: sea lions playing with our

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*(Camera Gods continued)*

daughters as they snorkeled above us. Frank had our friend hold the camera while he used a macro setup for little critters. As they surfaced, they realized that our buddy had dropped the camera. A group of divers conducted a search of the area, but the camera was lost to the underwater camera gods along with the photographs we had been gifted with. Six weeks later the camera, lens, and roll of slide film showed up in the mail! Divers on the next week's trip found it on the reef and mailed it to us.

Camera gods can be generous. One day they had a grasshopper appear in front of the preying mantis I was photographing. I captured a sequence of the mantis stalking and catching it, sucking its guts out, and grooming itself after its prey hopped away. The camera gods control the weather and lighting that make or break a photo op. A wise photographer periodically acknowledges them and pays them their due respect. It helps if you make an occasional offering or sacrifice. Over the years we have made a multitude of offerings to the camera gods in return for many amazing photographic opportunities. We have flooded camera housings and strobes while diving; in return, we have a 40-year library of great shots and phenomenal memories. We often flirt with the camera gods as we repeatedly lose and re-find lens caps out in nature. Frank recently contributed a camera battery to the gods when the chest wader pocket it was in went below the pond's water level (don't ask). Once, while photographing a great blue heron, I had one tennis shoe sucked off my foot in the pond muck where I got stuck—but I got to keep the photos. Baggage handlers in the middle of Botswana broke my Nikon 100-400mm lens in half, but only after I had been gifted with over 4000 African wildlife images. Once, we were forced to gate check our camera gear on a Denver to Bozeman connecting flight to photograph Yellowstone National Park in its autumn colors. Frank's gear was there on arrival, mine was not. It did arrive, four days later, having spent three days on the tarmac in Denver we're told. For four days we

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*(Camera Gods continued)*

challenged our marriage by sharing a camera. Still married. But the camera gods were generous—several shots from that trip have been recognized in our club competitions. Sometimes the sacrifice is as simple as surviving really tough conditions—like hiking over a mile in 95-degree heat with 95% humidity to photograph orangutans in the wild. (The camera gods delivered us mothers, babies, toddlers, adolescents, and a big male). Or braving 112-degree heat to photograph jaguars in the Brazilian Pantanal. (Not only did the camera gods provide 23 unique jaguar encounters, they delivered giant anteaters, a tamandua, giant river otters, a multitude of caimans, and a tapir with her very young baby.) Or slogging through knee-deep mud for five days to photograph grizzly bears in their natural settings. (The gods were so generous the first time, we went back and did it again a couple of years later.) Or waiting in **-40-**degree temperatures to photograph Yellowstone's Wapiti wolf pack trying to take down a bison. (They failed but it was exciting to watch and photograph.) Or traveling 2½ days straight, five flights each way, to photograph whale sharks. (The camera gods delivered awesomely on this expedition.) On Rinca, where we went to photograph Komodo dragons, Frank endured a hot, grueling, one-hour hike where he saw absolutely nothing while I sat comfortably at the edge of the park ranger station (bad knees) and had 45 minutes of three dragons mating, fighting, and drooling. I am eternally grateful for his sacrifice. Then there was the four-hour predawn backroad trip to photograph the Caracol ruins in Belize. But the camera gods sent torrential rains over night that flooded out the final bridge we needed to cross, fifteen minutes from our goal. There was nothing to do but turn around, driving back through the mud. (On the way, we stopped at Chechem Hah caves with a guide to ourselves, shooting 1600-year-old artifacts, cave scorpion spiders, bats, and tarantulas.)

See? The camera gods giveth and they

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*(Camera Gods continued)*

taketh. They are often appreciative of our sacrifices. They like to be acknowledged from time to time. However, it is important to recognize the difference between offerings made to the camera gods (where they taketh) and just plain stupid user error (SUE in IT lingo). Leaving a camera battery in a jacket pocket that went through the laundry—SUE. Leaving the lens cap on the underwater camera while shooting an amazing baby sea turtle series—SUE. The camera setup tumbling off the tripod when the quick release was not locked in—SUE. Forgetting to rewind the film before opening the back of the camera in full sunlight—SUE. A companion dropping the case holding his entire set of full memory cards out of the jeep somewhere in South Africa—SUE. Though, perhaps that was actually an accepted offering from which the rest of us benefited greatly. This one is hard to discern.

So, the next time you have a righteous shoot, look to the camera gods. Thank them profusely, and hopefully they will not taketh so much as they giveth.

### **Annual Salon & Awards Banquet**

Save the date: Our club's annual awards banquet is scheduled for **Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at Der Dutchman** (445 South Jefferson Ave., Plain City). Doors open at 6:00pm with a buffet dinner served at 6:30 (beef, chicken, fish, multiple sides, and dessert). Audrey and Frank Begun will serve as the event entertainment with a presentation titled "Photographing Hidden Worlds." This not-too-technical exploration into finding "stuff" in hidden worlds combines nature photography images of small stuff, camouflage and mimicry, night subjects, and more.

Prints submitted to the annual salon will be displayed for viewing and awards will be announced for both the salon judging results and for the season. Cost per person is \$30 and guests are welcome. Make your reservations before 5pm on May 27<sup>th</sup>:

[https://westbridgecc.com/aws/WBCC/input\\_for\\_m/display\\_form\\_01\\_show?which\\_form=80174](https://westbridgecc.com/aws/WBCC/input_for_m/display_form_01_show?which_form=80174)

### **Club Competition News**

Our club's April 20<sup>th</sup> competition theme is "Portraits in the Style Of..." Digital image submissions are due in Zenfolio or emailed to Carol Shurlow ([shurlowc751@gmail.com](mailto:shurlowc751@gmail.com)) by 10:00 pm, Monday **April 13<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 prints to the competition judging on **April 20<sup>th</sup>**. Our Competition Committee has arranged with Bobbie Atlas and Ray Clark to judge this complex competition theme. In essence, the assignment is to share images that relate to the style of one of the artists in the list provided (see the club website details [https://westbridgecc.com/aws/WBCC/pt/sd/calendar/366920/PARENT/layout\\_details/fallse](https://westbridgecc.com/aws/WBCC/pt/sd/calendar/366920/PARENT/layout_details/fallse)). It is worth spending some time learning about the different artists listed. Note that the judges will not review animal portraits, landscapes, and other types of images.

It is not necessary to identify a specific work by the artist whose style you are emulating: this competition is about capturing the spirit or essence of an artist's style, not "copying" one of their artworks. Note that in **naming your digital files you will include "in the style of \_\_\_\_\_" after your club image title. For prints, this month do not put your name on the back! Instead, use your club id #, title of your image, and "in the style of \_\_\_\_\_" on the back.** Our judges will need to turn the mounted prints over to see who the work relates to and this will keep your images anonymous. Our April judges are Bobbie (Teal) Atlas and Ray Clark who presented to our club in the fall as preparation for this competition theme. Check out their websites at <https://www.bobbiatealphotography.com/> and <https://www.secondstreetphotography.com/> to renew your familiarity with them.

### **Annual Salon**

It is not too soon to begin prepping your submissions for the May Salon. Salon  
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*(Annual Salon continued)*

digital image submissions are due in Zenfolio or emailed to Carol Shurlow by 10:00 pm, **Monday May 11<sup>th</sup>** ([shurlowc751@gmail.com](mailto:shurlowc751@gmail.com)). Images should be placed in the category selected during prior competitions this year (Novice, Intermediate/ Advanced, or Master). Matted/mounted (unframed) prints should be dropped off to our meeting room at Midwest Photo between 6:30-7:30pm on **Monday May 18<sup>th</sup>**. Judging will be completed by a team of three judges. Submitted prints will be returned at the **June 1<sup>st</sup> Awards Ceremony** during our club's annual banquet and awards announced at that time. [If you are not planning to attend the banquet, please make arrangements to have your prints collected for you.]

Consult pages 10-11 of the *Competition Rules and Guidelines* link on our club website for details about the annual salon competition (<https://westbridgecc.com/aws/WBCC/pt/sp/competitions>). Gather all of your images that placed 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> from September 2025 through April 2026. That is your salon body of work, regardless of how many there are. As an alternative, you may substitute an image that earned Honorable Mention recognition during this season for a 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> award image in that same category—you may not substitute a new or unrecognized image. If you did not receive 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> recognition on two or more images in a category (digital, monochrome print, color print), you may submit up to two images of your choice (new or previously submitted) in that category. For example, if you received a 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> on one digital image, you may submit a second digital image of your choice. All of your submissions go into the competition level where you have been competing this season: digital novice, intermediate/advanced, or master level; and, print or advanced print for both color and monochrome prints. Our salon judging panel will be announced in the next club newsletter.

### **Exhibitions News**

The club's next photo exhibition will be in July—details and instructions forthcoming!

### **Competition Themes for 2026-2027**

Our Competition Committee has announced next year's competition themes (approved by the Board at its February meeting).

- Four months will have "Open" themes: September, October, February, and April.
- November's theme is "Low Light."
- December's is "Taken in Ohio."
- January's is "Taken During 2026."
- March's is "Patterns or Repetition."

The themes are an opportunity to stretch ourselves and try something outside of our usual and customary zones. The assigned judges will be announced as the dates get closer. Knowing the themes early can help us all think about unique approaches to addressing them in our work over the summer and following months.

### **Critique Nights for 2026-2027**

Our Competition Committee determined that the 5<sup>th</sup> Monday critique nights will be interactive in nature. Rob Formantelli has offered to put submitted images up on the viewing screen and to live-edit based on critique comments offered by club members. This approach is aimed at garnering constructive critique from various perspectives, critique that can help us improve our images and photography efforts. It will be open to members competing in the Novice and Intermediate/Advanced categories. Guidelines and submission details will be provided as the scheduled dates approach.

### **Member Recognition**

Several current Westbridge Camera Club members have gained "Lifetime Membership" status. These individuals have been members for 25 or more years. They are **Mark Fohl** (since 1985), **Charles Bowdle** (since 1988), **Ted Stone** (since 1992), and **Cherry Williams** (since 2000). With history comes knowledge and experience from which we all benefit. If you believe you have also achieved lifetime membership status, please inform the club president to have it confirmed—club records are a bit confusing,  
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*(Lifetime Members continued)*

especially if membership was interrupted at any point (we are recognizing 25 total years, not necessarily 25 contiguous years).

### **April Education**

Our club education committee invited photographer Robert Studzinski to present our education program on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Robert's emphasis in his own work is about people in their lived environments and contexts. His 30 years of work experiences with juvenile felons helped inform his point of view about the way people live. He has spent over 40 years "in the wilds," exploring "endangered peoples" and the ways they live a "cultural past, alive in the present." Robert will share "anthropologies" experiences and photography of many interesting people encountered in their natural habitats. His body of work is an excellent demonstration of in-the-field portraits that reflect "the style of" some artists in our April competition list. His travels have included Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Laos, Mali, Bolivia, Mexico, Haiti, the Italian Piedmont, Ethiopia, South Africa, Poland, Trinidad and Tobago, Ecuador, and post-Katrina Mississippi. His works include images of Ohio juveniles on probation, refugees, and disaster survivors. A small sample of his work is available to view on *Lensculture's* website (<https://www.lensculture.com/robert-studzinski>). In addition, he currently has an exhibit at the Kendal Gallery (Oberlin College) called "Eyewitness on a Path Less Taken."

### **Photo Feedback Interest Group**

John Butterfield has announced the season's final photo feedback interest group session scheduled for **Monday May 11<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 3:15 pm at the Old Worthington Library, 820 N. High St., Worthington.** Interested members should register by email with John at [jbutter47@gmail.com](mailto:jbutter47@gmail.com) before noon on Friday **March 8<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 constructive feedback

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*(Photo Feedback Group continued)*

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 May 9<sup>th</sup>**) and/or as matted/mounted prints. This is opportunity for peer feedback on images you are considering for the May Salon!

### **Member Noted Opportunities**

The KelbyOne 2026 Lightroom Conference is scheduled for May 4-6<sup>th</sup>. This is a fully online educational event. Early bird registration through May 5<sup>th</sup> is \$149 (full price is \$299). This registration price provides a full year of access to the zoom sessions. See <https://kelbyoneline.com/> for more information and to decide if this one is for you.

At Midwest Photo Learning Studio you can enroll in a variety of live on-site courses and workshops taught in the studio where we host our club meetings (see <https://mpexlearningstudio.com/>). There is an Adobe Lightroom Course April 4<sup>th</sup> and the Introduction to Photography series begins April 7<sup>th</sup> all mentioned in our last newsletter. Leonardo Carrizo is teaching a session April 11<sup>th</sup> 10:30-noon on Travel Photography and Visual Composition (\$55), as well as Wildlife Photography: Gear, Settings & the Unpredictable Wild on May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:30-12:30 (\$65). You may recall prior presentations to the club by this well recognized visual storyteller.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> they offer a course on Principles of Lighting: Introduction to Flash & Off Camera Lighting. This one is taught by Monty Soungradith (\$70). Our longtime club member Jeff Sagar offers an immersive Astrophotography Workshop: How to Photograph the Night Sky (\$149). He presents this workshop on May 12<sup>th</sup> 4:30-6pm in the classroom, then moves to a hands-on field experience 6:45-9:30pm in

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*(Opportunities continued)*

dark sky conditions near Delaware Lake/Dam. See the website for more opportunities scheduled in May.

On both Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> and Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> (10am-5pm) Midwest Photo is hosting an in-store Trade & Get Paid session. They suggest bringing in clean cameras (DSLR or mirrorless), lenses (Canon, Nikon, Sony, Fuji, etc.), flashes & lighting gear, and select accessories for evaluation. With your gear, bring any chargers, caps, straps, and original boxes you may have for them. Their team will assess the items and offer you cash—with a 10% boost on this special date only. Or you can get 20% more trade-in value toward a new or new-to-you purchase.

**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, Cherry, and John are happy to assist.