

ALAMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

2012-2026



August 2026 Newsletter

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Photo by Stephan Kiefer

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President's Comments—August 2026

By Keith O'Leary

Hello! Thanks to those of you who weathered the storm last month to attend the presentation/demo of Inpixio Photo Studio Pro. I thought it was fun and engaging to have many of you participate and ask questions as we explored the capabilities, and limits, of Photo Studio together. By the way, I did figure out how to use the Clone tool. Alt/click will allow you to select the portion to clone. Then you can paint it where needed. It actually works quite well, especially to cover up any artifacts left over from not-so-perfect object erasures! 😊

I'm looking forward to the August PhotoShow of old, I mean historical, photos to be judged by Brian Fullington.

And hard to believe but the Esperanza Festival will be here before you know it. That will be our "field trip event" in September. More to come on that in next month's newsletter.

Well, keep reading and enjoy the rest of our August newsletter. Stay well and happy shooting!

Your President,
Keith O'Leary

APC ACTIVITIES - August 2026

- **Club Meeting** **August 17, 2026**

APC Board with Contact Info



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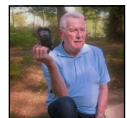
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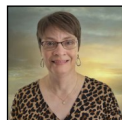
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Programs for 2026

By John Reich

- ✓ January - Sterling Stevens of Sterling Stevens Design
Subject - Architectural and Fine Art Photography
- ✓ March - Mio Winkle
Subject - Mio's Underwater Photography
- ✓ May - Joe McDonald of McDonald Wildlife
Subject - The Best Techniques and Settings for Wildlife Photography
- ✓ July - Keith O'Leary
Subject - Photo Editing with InPixio Photo Studio
- September - Steve Dingeldein
Subject - Astrophotography
- November - Ann Parks of Ann Marson Annstracts
Subject - Abstract Photography

What other program topics are you interested in? Let me know of any suggestions you may have. Thanks! - John



Summer 2026 Personal Field Trip:



The United States 250th Anniversary Celebrations

This summer celebrations will be taking place all over the country on July 4th and at other times. Wherever and whenever (July-August) you are viewing one, take photos. Look for the interestingly unusual. You will have the opportunity to submit up to 5 of your favorites in the usual manner. Details for submission will be emailed at a later date.

Hugh Comfort – Outings/Field Trips

August PhotoShow Theme: Historic & Historical

A Perfect Fit for America's 250th Birthday

As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary, August's theme — **Historic & Historical** — invites us to explore the past with our photographs. This is a chance to photograph places, objects, and stories that shaped our country or simply remind us of earlier times. Whether you head out with your camera or revisit your archives, this theme offers endless creative possibilities. This theme also fits with Hugh's Summer Personal Field Trip.

Historic vs. Historical — Why the Difference Matters

These two words look similar, but they're not interchangeable. Understanding the distinction can help guide your photographic choices.

Historic

Used for events, places, or objects that were important — moments that changed something. Think: **"This mattered."**

Examples:

- a historic election
- a historic building
- a historic discovery

Historical

Used for anything connected to the past, whether or not it was significant. Think: **"It happened in the past."**

Examples:

- historical records
- historical fiction
- a historical map

Both categories are rich with photographic potential — just in different ways.

HISTORIC Subjects

These are momentous, influential, or world-shaping. The key idea: This mattered in history.

Consider photographing:

- The site of a major civil rights event
- A battlefield or memorial tied to a turning point
- A building where a major decision was made
- A bridge, monument, or structure that changed a region
- A location where a famous speech or protest occurred
- Artifacts from a pivotal moment

These images can carry emotional weight, context, and storytelling power.

***Continued* - August PhotoShow Theme: “Historic & Historical”**

HISTORICAL Subjects

These are from the past, but not necessarily important. The key idea: **It’s old — not necessarily world-changing.**

Great options include:

- An old barn, mill, or farmhouse
- Vintage tools, cameras, or machinery
- A preserved 19th-century street or storefront
- Historical reenactors at a festival
- Old letters, maps, or documents
- A “period” scene (colonial kitchen, Victorian parlor, etc.)
- A steam locomotive or antique car

These subjects evoke nostalgia, craftsmanship, and the passage of time.

Shoot Something New

Visit a local landmark, museum, battlefield, or historic district. Look for details — textures, signage, architectural features, or artifacts that tell a story.

Photo Archives

I’m sure many of us have images from past travels, museum visits, or family history projects. This is a perfect month to share them.

Why This Theme Matters

Historic and historical subjects remind us that photography is more than capturing a moment — it’s preserving memory, context, and meaning. As our country celebrates 250 years, your images can help reflect the layers of time that brought us here.

October PhotoShow – It’s Not Too Soon

It’s not too soon to start thinking of the photographs that you will want to be submitting for the October show. The theme is ***Your Favorite Vacation Location***. If you have not had some vacation time this year, when you do that is a perfect time to think about capturing some of the enjoyment. Not Traveling? No problem. I know that we all have some photos that have captured images of those special spots from prior vacations. They are the perfect photographs to share with the rest of us.

I will be including the Submission Guidelines in next month’s newsletter.

August PhotoShow – “Historic & Historical”

Submission Guidelines

David Hall, PhotoShow Chair

This month we are stepping back in time with our theme of “Historic & Historical”. Everyone can submit up to 2 (or 3) photos. The photos are based on our theme which is described in detail in this month’s newsletter article.

Submission Guidelines:

Number of Entries: Up to Two or Three (2 or 3) entries per member.

Format: .jpg

File Naming: Please name your photos using the following format:

Firstname.lastname_01, _02, _03

Examples: john.doe_01.jpg john.doe_02.jpg john.doe_03.jpg

Size: Between 1 and 25 MB

[This size displays best when projected on our large monitor]

Email: Send all images to apcphotoshow@gmail.com

Email Subject Line: include the month of the PhotoShow and your name

Example: Photos for (Month) PhotoShow – John Doe

Entry Deadline: Thursday, August 13, 2026

Please Note:

*Submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines above **may** be returned.*

*If you have any issues with formatting or submitting, please let us know at apcphotoshow@gmail.com and we will be happy to assist. Also **let us know if your submitted photo is not acknowledged within a few days and/or by the deadline.***

Photo editing software with AI features (e.g., Affinity Photo, ON1, and Lightroom) is allowed. Total AI creation of photos (e.g., ChatGPT and CoPilot) is not allowed.



WEBMASTER NOTES

Our website: <https://www.alamancephoto.com/> is a great way:

- To introduce potential members to the club.
- To stay up to date on the club events.

Thanks,

Christie O'Leary—Webmaster

APC Membership Corner

August, 2026

The Alamance Photo Club (APC) welcomes photographers of all skill levels, providing opportunities for members to explore their specific photography styles. Guests are always welcome, so please continue to invite family, friends, and community members to our meetings. Meetings alternate between programs with guest speakers and themed photo shows to showcase your creativity. Please refer to the monthly newsletter calendar for full details on all upcoming meetings and events. Additionally, as an affiliate of Alamance Arts (AA), we have an opportunity to display our work at the Captain White House. This exhibit will highlight our members' photography in a new venue and provide greater exposure for our club. If you are interested in displaying photos, please let me know.

Resi Forrest – Membership Chair

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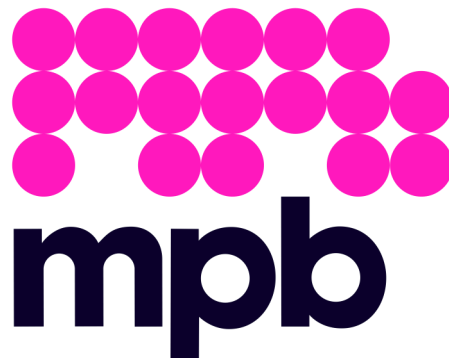


Photo by Dick Schenck

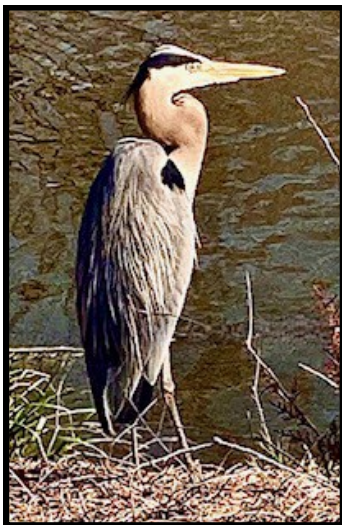


Photo by Ken Sellers



Photo by Sean Leahy



Stop Doing This If You Want Better Night Photos

By Richard Schneider

Night photography has a way of exposing every weakness in your technique.

Photos that looked perfectly sharp on your camera screen suddenly appear blurry. Colors look muddy. Highlights blow out. Shadows become noisy. And those stars you hoped would be crisp points of light turn into streaks.

The good news? Most disappointing night photos aren't caused by less expensive gear—they're caused by a handful of common mistakes. If you stop making these errors, your night photography will improve dramatically.



Photo captured by Ken Cheung

1. Stop Handholding Your Camera

Unless you're intentionally shooting handheld street scenes, trying to handhold your camera at night is usually a recipe for blurry images.

As light levels drop, shutter speeds become much longer.

Even the slightest movement from your hands can soften an otherwise beautiful image.

Instead:

- Use a sturdy tripod whenever possible.
- Trigger the shutter with a remote release or self-timer.
- Enable a 2-second delay if you don't have a remote.

A stable camera is the foundation of sharp night photography.

Stop Doing This If You Want Better Night Photos . . . Continued

2. Stop Using Auto Mode

Your camera has no idea what kind of night photo you're trying to create.

It may:

- Raise ISO much higher than necessary.
- Choose an aperture that's too wide or too narrow.
- Pick shutter speeds that don't match your subject.

Night photography almost always benefits from Manual Mode or Priority Modes.

You gain complete control over:

- Exposure
- Motion blur
- Noise
- Depth of field

Learning these settings is one of the biggest upgrades you can make.

3. Stop Leaving Autofocus On

Autofocus systems rely on contrast, and at night there often isn't enough of it.

Your camera may hunt back and forth or lock onto the wrong object entirely.

Instead:

- Focus before it gets dark if possible.
- Use Live View magnification.
- Manually focus on a bright star or distant light.
- Switch the lens to Manual Focus so it stays locked.

Many blurry night photos are simply the result of missed focus.

Stop Doing This If You Want Better Night Photos . . . Continued

4. Stop Using the Lowest ISO Every Time

Many photographers assume ISO 100 is always the best choice.

While that's often true during the day, it can force shutter speeds that are far too long once the sun goes down.

Sometimes increasing your ISO produces a cleaner final image because it allows you to use a faster shutter speed.

Don't be afraid of ISO 800, 1600, or even 3200 if the situation calls for it.

A little noise is usually much easier to fix than motion blur.

5. Stop Ignoring the Histogram

Your camera's LCD can be misleading in the dark.

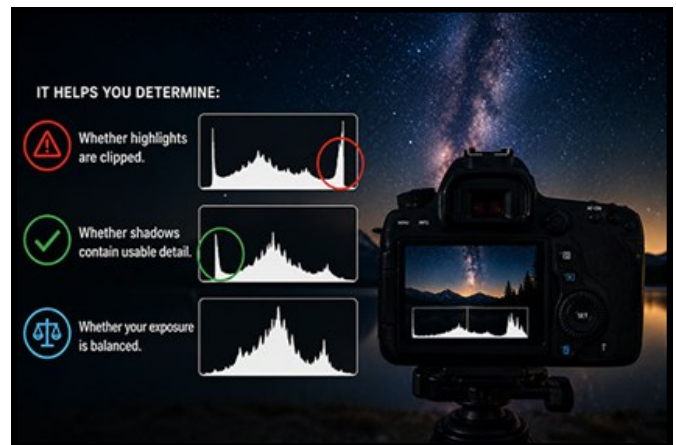
It often makes photos appear brighter than they really are.

Instead of judging exposure by the screen alone, check the histogram.

It helps you determine:

- Whether highlights are clipped.
- Whether shadows contain usable detail.
- Whether your exposure is balanced.

The histogram is a much more reliable guide than your eyes in low light.



6. Stop Shooting Wide Open without Thinking

Many lenses become softer at their widest aperture.

While settings like f/1.4 or f/1.8 let in more light, they can also reduce corner sharpness and increase optical imperfections.

If your scene allows it, try stopping down by about one stop.

The small loss in light is often worth the increase in image.

Stop Doing This If You Want Better Night Photos . . . Continued

7. Stop Forgetting About White Balance

Auto White Balance often struggles under artificial lighting.

Streetlights, LEDs, neon signs, and moonlight can all produce different color casts.

Instead:

- Shoot RAW.
- Experiment with Kelvin white balance.
- Fine-tune the colors during editing.

A carefully chosen white balance can make your night photos look far more natural.

8. Stop Rushing Your Composition

Darkness makes it tempting to point your camera at the brightest subject and press the shutter.

Instead, slow down and evaluate the scene.

Ask yourself:

- Is there an interesting foreground?
- Can leading lines strengthen the composition?
- Would reflections improve the image?
- Would moving a few feet create a better angle?

The best night photos combine technical precision with thoughtful composition.

9. Stop Leaving Image Stabilization On When Using a Tripod

Image stabilization is incredibly useful for handheld photography.

However, on some cameras and lenses it can actually introduce small movements when mounted on a tripod.

Photo captured by Roger Ce

If your camera is securely mounted:

- Turn image stabilization off.
- Let the tripod provide all the stability.

Some newer cameras automatically detect tripod use, so check your camera's manual to see how yours behaves.



Stop Doing This If You Want Better Night Photos . . . Continued

10. Stop Taking Just One Exposure

Night scenes often contain an enormous range of brightness.

One exposure may preserve the city lights while another captures shadow detail.

Taking multiple exposures gives you more flexibility during editing and increases the odds of coming home with a keeper.

It costs almost nothing to take a few extra frames.

Better Night Photography Starts With Better Habits

You don't need the newest camera or the fastest lens to create beautiful night photographs.

In many cases, simply avoiding these common mistakes can produce noticeably sharper, cleaner, and more professional-looking images.

The next time you're shooting after dark, remember to:

- Use a tripod.
- Focus manually when needed.
- Take control of your exposure in Manual Mode.
- Check your histogram regularly.
- Don't be afraid to raise your ISO.
- Slow down and compose with intention.

Night photography rewards patience. The more deliberate your approach, the more consistently you'll capture images that truly reflect the beauty of the scene.

Why Most Photography Practice Doesn't Actually Build Skill

Have you ever noticed how some photographers seem to improve incredibly fast, while others take thousands of photos and barely get any better?

The difference usually isn't talent.

It's how they practice.

One of the biggest mistakes photographers make is practicing without a specific objective.

They head out and simply "take pictures."

While that's enjoyable, it doesn't necessarily build new skills.

The photographers who improve the fastest usually focus on one skill at a time.

For example:

1. One outing might be dedicated entirely to tracking moving subjects.
2. Another might focus only on using different autofocus modes.
3. The next could be about learning how changing aperture affects depth of field.

By isolating a single technique, your brain receives much clearer feedback about what's working—and what isn't.

This kind of deliberate practice helps you improve much faster than trying to master everything at once.

Professional athletes don't practice every skill simultaneously.

Musicians don't try to perfect every song during every practice session.

Great photographers shouldn't either.

The fastest way to become a better photographer isn't taking more photos.

It's practicing with purpose.



Illuminated Peaks: How to Photograph Alpenglow

By Richard Schneider

Alpenglow, the rosy light of the setting or rising sun seen on high mountains, is a dream spectacle for photographers. This magical moment, when the mountains seem to catch fire with hues of pink, orange, and purple, offers a fleeting opportunity to capture nature's sublime beauty. Here's how you can immortalize this enchanting phenomenon through your lens.

Understanding Alpenglow

Before setting out, it's crucial to understand what alpenglow is and when it occurs. Unlike the direct light of golden hour, alpenglow is an indirect glow that lights up the mountain tops even before the sun crosses the horizon or after it has set. This phenomenon is most vivid when the sky is clear, and it typically lasts for just a few minutes during twilight.

Photo captured by Andrea Belussi



Planning Your Shoot

1. **Location Scouting:** Research locations known for their alpenglow sightings. High vantage points that overlook mountain ranges facing east or west are ideal. Apps and websites that track sun position can help you plan the timing of your shoot.
2. **Timing is Everything:** Since alpenglow is a transient phenomenon, knowing the sunrise or sunset times is vital. Arrive early to set up and be prepared to capture the fleeting moments of alpenglow.
3. **Weather Watch:** Clear skies are crucial for alpenglow. Monitor the weather forecasts closely and be ready to seize the moment when conditions are right.

Illuminated Peaks: How to Photograph Alpenglöw . . . Continued

Gear and Settings

- **Camera:** Any camera can capture alpenglöw, but those with manual settings will give you more control over the outcome.
- **Lens:** A wide-angle lens is ideal for capturing expansive landscapes, while a telephoto lens can help isolate distant peaks bathed in alpenglöw.
- **Tripod:** Use a tripod to stabilize your camera, especially in the low light conditions of twilight.
- **Settings:** Start with a low ISO to reduce noise, a small aperture (around f/8 to f/16) for depth of field, and adjust the shutter speed accordingly. Bracketing exposures is a good strategy to ensure you capture the dynamic range of the scene.

Composition Tips

- **Foreground Interest:** Include elements in the foreground to add depth and scale to your compositions.
- **Rule of Thirds:** Position the mountains along the intersections of the grid to create a balanced composition.
- **Leading Lines:** Use natural lines, such as rivers or paths, to guide the eye towards the glowing peaks.

Post-Processing

Subtlety is key when editing your alpenglöw photos. Enhance the natural colors without oversaturating them, and adjust the shadows and highlights to reveal detail in both the dark and bright areas of the image.

Summary:

Photographing alpenglöw is about capturing the fleeting moments of nature's grandeur. With the right preparation, equipment, and technique, you can freeze this ethereal glow in time, creating images that resonate with the beauty of the natural world. Remember, the journey and experience of chasing alpenglöw are as rewarding as the photographs you take.

Finding Soft Light for Photography

By Richard Schneider

Soft lighting is a sought-after technique in the world of photography. It helps in reducing harsh shadows, creating a dreamy atmosphere, and bringing out the best features in a subject. Whether you're an amateur photographer or a seasoned professional, understanding where to find soft lighting can elevate your photographs to new heights. Here's a guide to the best places to find soft lighting:

Golden Hour Magic

The golden hour is the short window of time just after sunrise and just before sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm and soft glow. The shadows are long and diffused, giving images a cinematic and dreamy look. This time is ideal for portraits, landscapes, and almost any genre of photography. The exact timing of the golden hour varies depending on your geographical location and the time of year, so using apps like "Golden Hour Calculator" can be a huge help.

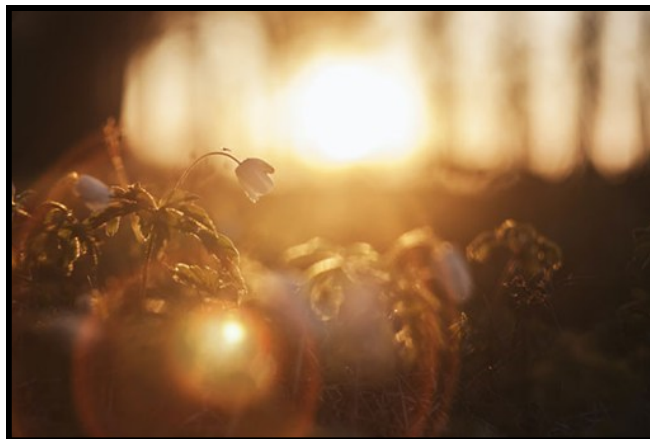


Photo captured by Ilja Tulit

Overcast Days

Contrary to popular belief, a sunny day is not always a photographer's best friend. Bright sunlight can lead to overexposed photos and harsh shadows. Overcast days, however, act as a natural diffuser, spreading the light evenly and reducing contrasts. It's like having a massive softbox in the sky, perfect for outdoor shoots.

Finding Soft Light for Photography . . . Continued

Shaded Areas

On a bright day, look for areas of shade, such as under a tree, an alleyway, or the shadow side of a building. These spots provide protection from the direct sun, allowing for soft lighting conditions. Remember to adjust your camera settings to account for the lower light levels.

Indoor Windows

Windows can act as natural softboxes. Position your subject near a window, but not directly facing it. The light streaming in is diffused by the glass and any curtains or blinds, creating a soft illumination. Morning is often the best time for window lighting, but it depends on the direction the window faces and any obstructions outside.



Photo captured by Vitaliy Shevchenko

Reflectors and Diffusers

If you're serious about achieving soft lighting, investing in reflectors and diffusers is a wise choice. Reflectors bounce light onto your subject, filling in shadows and creating an even tone. Diffusers, on the other hand, scatter light rays, turning harsh light into a gentle glow. They can be particularly helpful when shooting in midday sun.

Finding Soft Light for Photography . . . Continued

Artificial Lighting

Sometimes, nature won't cooperate, and you'll need to create your own soft lighting. Soft-boxes, umbrellas, and LED panels are all tools that photographers use to mimic the soft, diffused light found in nature. When using artificial lighting, it's crucial to understand the direction and intensity of the light to achieve the desired effect.

In conclusion, soft lighting is a vital tool for photographers aiming to produce ethereal, flattering, and professional images. Whether harnessing the natural glow of the golden hour, utilizing the even illumination of overcast skies, or employing tools like reflectors and softboxes, understanding and mastering soft lighting techniques can truly transform one's photographic output. Both natural and artificial sources offer opportunities to achieve this effect, making it accessible to photographers of all levels. By being observant, adaptive, and knowledgeable about these techniques, one can elevate their photography, capturing moments in their most beautiful light.

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