

ALAMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

2012–2026

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June 2026 Newsletter

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Photo by Tom Carroll

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President's Comments—June 2026

By Keith O'Leary

Thanks to Joe & Mary Ann McDonald for the interesting program on Wildlife Photography last month! For anyone who missed the meeting, a link to the recording is available by request by emailing alamancephoto@gmail.com.

FYI: Our program on Abstract Photography originally scheduled for July has been moved to November so we will have another program for July which will be advertised in the July newsletter.

Did anyone see the alignment of Jupiter, the Moon and Venus last month? When the Moon, Jupiter, and Venus align in a conjunction, they create a spectacular, highly visible celestial alignment where these three exceptionally bright bodies appear clustered closely together in the night or twilight sky. Because these are the three brightest objects in the night sky (after the Sun), the event is often referred to as a "perfect trifecta". Christie had heard about this on the radio, so I went out on May 19th and saw the following in

the western sky and took a photo with my phone. Pretty cool.



I hope you enjoy the rest of this month's newsletter. Stay well and happy shooting!

Your President,
Keith O'Leary

APC ACTIVITIES - June 2026

- **Club Meeting** **June 15, 2026**
- **June PhotoShow**

APC Board with Contact Info



President

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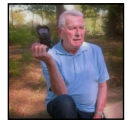
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Programs for 2026

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

The July program, Abstract Photography with Anne Marson, is moving to the November meeting due to change in schedule by the presenter.



Photo by Stephan Kiefer



Photo by Spencer Wiersma



Photo by David Brown

June PhotoShow – “Flowers”

David Hall, PhotoShow Chair

This month, we are diving into a vibrant favorite: “**Flowers.**”

What perfect timing! The weather is warming up, the days are longer, and nature is putting on a spectacular show of brilliant color. Whether you’re a landscape purist, a macro enthusiast, or a lover of birds and wildlife, flowers offer something for everyone. I’m hard-pressed to believe anyone can resist snapping a fresh bloom or two—or that you don’t already have at least one all-time favorite waiting in your catalog! We are not having a judge, you will just be sharing your work with your fellow members.

Submission Details: Every member can submit up to **2 (or 3)** of their best floral shots.

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

Email: Send all images to apcphotoshow@gmail.com

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

Example: Photos for June PhotoShow – John Doe

Entry Deadline: **Friday, June 12, 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.

Spring 2026 Personal Field Trip to The Museum of Life + Science

When APC last had a field trip to this facility, its main attraction was the Butterfly House. Since then, it has grown and developed considerably, with its mission to *ignite curiosity and foster a community connected to science by investing in playful learning that enriches both individuals and the world*. Located less than five miles from downtown Durham, the Museum of Life and Science is one of North Carolina's top family destinations. Their 84-acre campus includes a two-story science center, one of the largest butterfly conservatories on the East Coast, and beautifully landscaped outdoor exhibits. Their interactive experiences include *Dinosaur Trail*, *Ellerbe Creek Railway*, *Hideaway Woods*, *Into the Mist*, *Earth Moves*, and *Aerospace*, which features one of the largest collections of Apollo-era NASA artifacts in the state. The Museum is also an AZA-accredited zoo, home to rescued black bears, lemurs, endangered Red Wolves, and more than 60 species of live animals.

The museum, located at 433 W. Murray Ave, Durham, NC 27704, is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm. Adult admission fee is \$24(Senior \$22). Details about the facility can be found on its website <https://www.lifeandscience.org/>. It does have a café and parking. And be sure to check out it's photo policy

Photos for this personal field trip may be taken anytime from April 1 -June 30.. You may submit up to 5 of your favorite photos from this field trip by June 30.

Submission instructions are as in the past:

Please name your images as follows: first name.last name_xx

Ex. - john.doe_01, john.doe_02, etc.

Instead of emailing us your submissions, we have created an album in Google Photos to which you can directly upload your images.

Hugh Comfort – Outings/Field Trips



WEBMASTER NOTES

Are you aware of all that is available on the club's website? To familiarize yourself with the website let's do a little scavenger hunt. Go to www.alamancephoto.com to start your hunt! You may post your answers at apcgames2@gmail.com. If you get all the right answers, your name will be entered into a drawing for a prize.

1. What page of the website can you see the upcoming events for the current month?
2. What month in 2024 (Back to Basics) did we explore depth of field & angle of view as well as practiced at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC?
3. What color of napkins and plates were used at the Double Vision reception?
4. What page features a Pilot Mountain photo?
5. What gas station sign is in one of Taylor McBride's galley photos of a stadium?
6. What icon can you click on to get to previous Christmas Slideshows? Where is the icon found on the website?
7. Who was the first-place winner of our 2025 April PhotoShow?
8. Which photographer took a photo of a brick wall marking past floods in Saxapahaw during our summer field trip in 2025?
9. What icon can you click on to renew membership or send someone who wants to join?
10. What organization is APC an affiliate of?

Christie O'Leary—Webmaster

APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns (raymunns@bellsouth.net) no later than the 20th of each month. Please include your name, contact info (phone and/or email) and if each item is for sale or something you are looking to purchase. Also notify Ray when items should be removed from the newsletter.

Master Backlighting in Wildlife Photography

By Mark Hamblin

Backlighting can make all the difference in wildlife photography. Learn how to give your photography the edge by achieving backlit photos.

If you read the manual that came with your camera, it will invariably advise you to shoot with the sun coming from over your shoulder to illuminate your subject from the front. This is sound advice and of course will produce very good, evenly lit images. But have you ever considered turning this approach on its head and shooting directly into the light to create dramatic backlit pictures? The prospect can be a bit scary, and there are certainly a few pitfalls to watch out for, but once mastered backlighting can create a wonderful mood in your photos.



Whilst I'm a great fan of backlighting, it doesn't work in all situations with all subjects, and so a cautionary approach is required as well as an element of experimentation. Learning to recognize the kind of lighting situations and subjects that can be backlit effectively is perhaps the initial key to success. In theory, any form of light can be used to backlight a subject, but the stronger the light source, the greater the backlighting effect and the stronger the contrast.

Master Backlighting in Wildlife Photography . . . Continued

The angle of the light is also important. Midday sun, for example, could be used to back-light a subject but the light will be coming from a high angle creating a top lit, as well as slightly backlit, effect. Whereas, when the sun is nearer the horizon early and late in the day, the subject will be more specifically backlit with a much more pronounced and therefore dramatic effect. For the same reason, the winter months are better than summer because the arc of the sun is lower in the sky producing a more pleasing backlighting result.

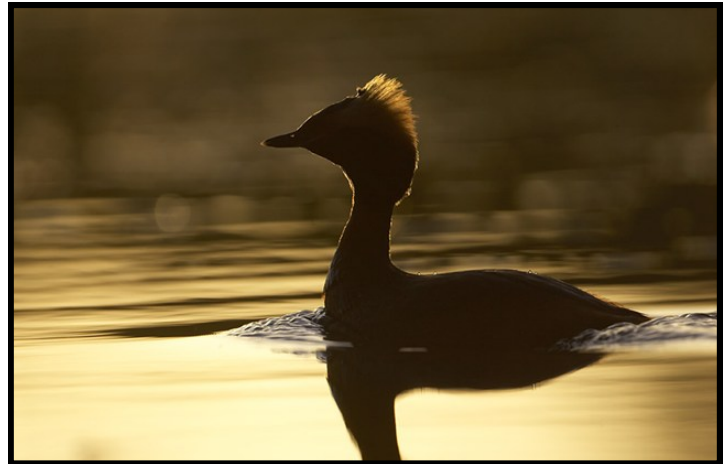
This technique works well with many animals, creating a dramatic rim-lit effect where their fur catches the light, but it can be equally effective with birds – especially those with a distinctive shape. Birds such as terns and gulls can similarly produce very effective backlit shots when photographed in flight using backlighting to highlight their semi-translucent wings.



Aside from finding a good subject to photograph, the key to successful backlit pictures is a 'good' exposure. I use the word 'good' here rather than 'correct' because what might be deemed to be the correct exposure may not necessarily produce the best results. The reason being that backlit images can be very subjective in terms of how you want the overall picture to look. Sometimes you may want the body of the subject to be well lit, in which case the rim-lit fur may be blown out a little. At other times you may want to expose specifically for the rim-lit areas creating a semi silhouetted effect, or you may choose to expose somewhere between the two extremes.

Master Backlighting in Wildlife Photography . . . Continued

One way to control the exposure more precisely is to use either spot or partial (spot) metering, which allows you to take a very specific meter reading directly from the subject. By doing this the background light is excluded from the meter reading and the shaded part of the subject should be well exposed. There are a few things to watch out for though with



this approach to metering because the tone of the subject may also influence the reading. This will be most noticeable for dark subjects, which are likely to affect the meter reading and produce an image that is too light, so you'll need to apply some exposure compensation to adjust for this and also check the histogram. The histogram for backlit subjects will be quite different from a front lit image with spikes at both the dark (left) side and bright (right) side of the histogram. Don't worry about this. The important thing to check for is that most of the tones have been recorded without a strong bias towards either the left or right of the graph.



Exposing specifically for the shaded part of the subject can also lead to overexposed highlights. This may be okay if it's a relatively small area, but it's always worth viewing the LCD image with the 'Highlight Alert' function activated to check for 'excessive blinkies' after you've taken a few shots. In order to reduce the extent of blown highlights and

achieve a more balanced exposure, stick with the spot metering technique from the shaded side of the subject but darken the image by dialing in -1 stop on the exposure compensation scale if shooting in a semi-auto mode. To darken the image further and emphasize the backlit part of the subject, simply dial in more compensation (e.g. -2 stops).

Master Backlighting in Wildlife Photography . . . Continued



Top Tips to Make Your Rim-Lit Photos Stand Out

Shoot your subject against a dark background. This will accentuate the backlit parts of your subject and help make them stand out more dramatically. Also, line your subject up so that you can eliminate any bright (hot spot) areas behind the subject, which can be distracting and spoil the overall effect of the shot.

Bracket your exposures to alter the look of your images. Exposing for the highlights around your subject can create very dramatic effects with just the outline of the subject visible. This can also be achieved by adjusting the exposure sliders during raw processing.

Soft backlighting when the sun is weak or low in the sky will lower the contrast levels and reduce the chance of blocked shadows and blown highlights.

Shield the front element of your lens to prevent flare. This can be a major issue when shooting into the light, so always fit a lens hood and, if necessary, cast a shadow over the lens using your hand or piece of card. Alternatively, compose with the sun hidden behind the subject so that no direct light is striking the front of the lens.

Why Photographers Notice Beauty Everyone Else Misses

By Richard Schneider

Walk through a city street with a photographer and you'll often notice something interesting: they stop for things most people walk right past.

- A reflection in a puddle.
- Light hitting the edge of a building.
- The texture of peeling paint.
- Fog drifting through trees.
- A shadow stretching across a sidewalk.

To everyone else, it's just another ordinary moment. To a photographer, it's a photograph waiting to happen.

Photography changes the way you see the world.

Most people move through life quickly. They focus on destinations, schedules, notifications, and routines. But photographers are constantly scanning for light, color, emotion, patterns, and timing. Over time, that way of seeing becomes automatic.



You begin noticing things that used to feel invisible.

- The golden glow just before sunset.
- Interesting faces in a crowd.
- Symmetry in architecture.
- Tiny details in nature.
- The mood created by weather.

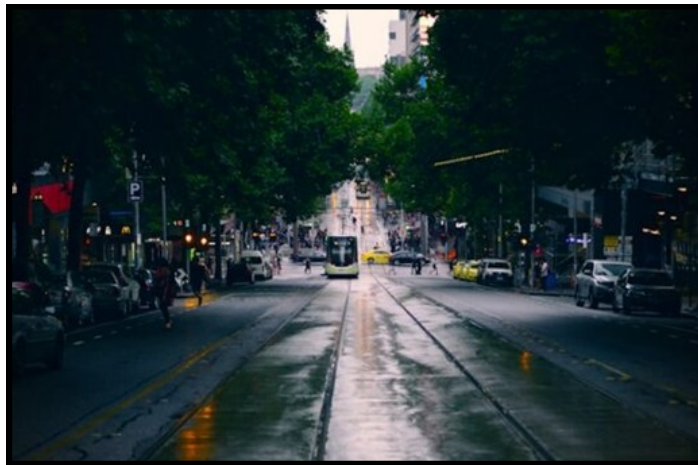
Why Photographers Notice Beauty Everyone Else Misses . . . Continued

Photography trains your brain to slow down and observe.

And that's one of the most rewarding parts of becoming a photographer. The camera becomes more than just a tool — it becomes a reason to explore. A reason to pay attention. A reason to look deeper.

Even simple places start feeling different.

A parking garage becomes a place filled with leading lines and dramatic shadows. A rainy afternoon suddenly feels cinematic. A quiet neighborhood walk turns into an opportunity to discover colors, textures, and moments you never noticed before.



Photographers often talk about “having an eye,” but that eye is really built through practice and awareness.

The more you shoot, the more you train yourself to notice:

- Direction and quality of light
- Interesting compositions
- Emotional moments
- Contrast and color harmony
- Layers and depth
- Tiny visual details

Why Photographers Notice Beauty Everyone Else Misses . . . Continued

Eventually, beauty starts appearing everywhere.

And perhaps the best part is that photography encourages curiosity. It pushes you to explore places you might never visit otherwise. You start waking up early for sunrise, staying out for blue hour, wandering unfamiliar streets, or taking the long route home just to see what you might discover.

The world becomes more visually alive.

Photography also helps people appreciate ordinary life more deeply. You don't always need exotic travel destinations or expensive gear. Sometimes the best photographs happen in everyday places — your kitchen, your neighborhood, your backyard, or the streets around your home.

The camera teaches you to see significance in small moments.

That's why many photographers feel more connected to the world around them. They're actively searching for beauty every single day, even in places others overlook.

And once you start seeing the world this way, it's hard to turn it off.

You begin noticing the way morning light falls through windows. The expression on someone's face during a quiet moment. The atmosphere after a storm. The colors reflected in wet pavement after sunset.

Why Manual Mode Makes You a Better Photographer Faster

By Richard Schneider

Many photographers put off learning Manual mode, assuming it's only for professionals or that modern cameras can handle exposure decisions just fine. While automatic and semi-automatic modes are incredibly capable, relying on them for too long can slow your growth. Manual mode isn't about control for control's sake — it's about accelerating understanding. When used intentionally, it can shorten the learning curve and make you a more confident photographer faster.



Manual Mode Forces You to Understand Light

In automatic modes, the camera quietly solves problems for you. Manual mode removes that safety net. You must consciously decide how bright or dark the image should be, how motion is rendered, and how much depth of field you want. Each adjustment directly affects the image, and mistakes become immediate lessons. Over time, this repetition builds an intuitive understanding of how light behaves and how your camera responds to it.

You Learn Cause and Effect, Not Guesswork

Manual mode teaches photography as a system rather than a collection of rules. Change shutter speed and motion blur appears or disappears. Adjust aperture and background separation shifts. Raise ISO and noise becomes visible. Instead of memorizing settings for specific situations, you start recognizing patterns. This cause-and-effect learning is what allows photographers to adapt quickly in unfamiliar or fast-changing conditions.

Why Manual Mode Makes You a Better Photographer Faster . . . Continued

It Builds Confidence Instead of Dependency

Photographers who rely heavily on auto modes often hesitate when the camera struggles — harsh backlighting, night scenes, snow, or stage lighting. Manual mode removes that uncertainty. You're no longer waiting for the camera to "figure it out". When you know how to override exposure decisions intentionally, you trust your own judgment more than the meter, and that confidence shows in your work.

Faster Problem Solving in Real Situations

Manual mode may feel slower at first, but it ultimately speeds you up. Once exposure fundamentals are internalized, adjustments become instinctive. Instead of fighting exposure compensation or switching modes mid-shoot, you make small, deliberate changes and move on. This is especially valuable in genres like street photography, landscapes, and portrait work where lighting conditions shift constantly.

It Improves Your Use of Other Modes

Ironically, learning Manual mode also makes you better at using Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority, and even Auto. When you understand what the camera is likely to do — and why — you can anticipate mistakes before they happen. Manual mode sharpens your judgment, and that skill carries over to every shooting mode.

Manual Mode Isn't About Always Shooting Manual

Shooting in Manual mode doesn't mean abandoning convenience or automation forever. It's a training tool as much as a shooting mode. Spending time in Manual accelerates learning by making exposure decisions visible and deliberate. Once that foundation is solid, switching modes becomes a strategic choice instead of a crutch.

Final Thought

Manual mode doesn't make photography harder — it makes learning clearer. By forcing you to engage with light, exposure, and creative intent directly, it compresses years of passive experience into focused, hands-on understanding. If your goal is to improve faster, few tools are as effective as taking full control of your camera — at least for a while.

Why Auto Mode Fails in These Common Photo Scenes

By Richard Schneider

Auto mode is convenient. It's fast, effortless, and for many everyday situations, it works well enough.

But the moment you step into more challenging lighting or dynamic scenes, Auto mode starts making decisions that don't match what you actually want your photo to look like. That's when frustration sets in—photos come out too dark, too bright, blurry, or just... off.

Let's break down some of the most common scenes where Auto mode fails—and why.

1. Sunsets and Sunrises

You're looking at a rich, vibrant sky filled with oranges, reds, and purples.

Your camera? It sees all that brightness and tries to "correct" it to a neutral exposure.

Result: A washed-out, dull sunset that looks nothing like what you saw.

Auto mode is designed to average everything toward a middle brightness. It doesn't understand that you want the scene to be dramatic and slightly darker.

2. Snowy or Bright Beach Scenes

Snow and sand reflect a huge amount of light. Your camera sees all that brightness and assumes the scene is overexposed. So what does it do? It darkens everything.

Result: Gray-looking snow and lifeless beach photos.

In reality, these scenes should look bright and clean—but Auto mode pulls them down toward gray.

3. Night and Low-Light Photography

Low-light scenes are where Auto mode really struggles.

To compensate, your camera often raises ISO too high, uses shutter speeds that are too slow, or opens the aperture without considering depth of field.

Result: Grainy, blurry, inconsistent images.

Auto mode is guessing—and in low light, guessing doesn't cut it.

Why Auto Mode Fails in These Common Photo Scenes . . . Continued

4. Backlit Subjects

Think of someone standing in front of a sunset, bright window, or glowing background.

Your camera sees all that bright background light and exposes for it.

Result: Your subject turns into a silhouette.

Auto mode doesn't know your subject is the priority. It simply sees a bright scene and tries to protect the highlights.

5. Fast Action

Sports, kids, pets, wildlife, and moving subjects all require one thing above everything else: enough shutter speed.

But Auto mode doesn't always prioritize that. It often tries to balance exposure instead.

Result: Motion blur right when you needed sharpness.



The camera doesn't know the moment matters. It just tries to create a generally acceptable exposure.

6. High Contrast Scenes

Scenes with both very bright and very dark areas are difficult for any camera. Think forests with sunlight streaming through, city streets with deep shadows, or landscapes with a bright sky and dark foreground. Auto mode usually picks a compromise.

Result: Blown-out highlights, crushed shadows, or a flat image that doesn't capture the mood of the scene.

Instead of making a creative decision, Auto mode chooses the middle ground—and the middle ground is not always where the best photo lives.

Why Auto Mode Fails in These Common Photo Scenes . . . Continued

The Real Problem with Auto Mode

Auto mode isn't "bad". It's just generic. It's designed to produce an average result across almost any situation. But great photography isn't about average. It's about intention.

When you rely on Auto mode, you hand over important creative decisions, including brightness, motion blur, depth of field, and image clarity. And your camera simply doesn't know what you're trying to achieve.

What Actually Fixes This

The solution isn't memorizing complicated settings. It's understanding which setting matters most in each situation.

Sometimes you need to darken a sunset intentionally. Sometimes you need to brighten snow so it stays white. Sometimes you need a faster shutter speed for action. Sometimes you need to keep ISO from climbing too high.

Once you know what to adjust—and when—everything changes.

Photos become more consistent, more predictable, and more intentional.

Final Thought

Auto mode works... until it doesn't. And unfortunately, it tends to fail in the exact moments that matter most—the scenes you actually care about capturing. That's why learning even a small amount of manual control can make such a huge difference.

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is an affiliate of Alamance Arts