



*Photo by Resi Forrest*

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## President's Comments—January 2026

By Keith O'Leary

Hello. Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and is excited about new things ahead in 2026. As we celebrate our 14th anniversary as a club, I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to First Baptist Church for allowing us to meet in their facility. As you'll read below, you'll see our Program, Exhibit, PhotoShow & Field Trip chairs have some good things planned for us this year. This is membership renewal season and also a good time to invite others, new and old to photography, to come check us out.

Did you know that January is Creativity Month? The entire month is dedicated to fostering creativity, providing ongoing inspiration for new photographic projects and experiments.

And here are some specific photography-relevant National Days observed in January:

- January 5: National Bird Day - A great opportunity for wildlife and nature photographers to share their work, offer tips on bird photography, or share interesting facts about local species.

- January 14: Dress Up Your Pet Day - Perfect for pet photographers. Share photos of your dressed-up pets.
- Third Wednesday in January: Museum Selfie Day - This day encourages public engagement with arts and culture. Museums are increasingly allowing photography, making it a prime opportunity to take creative selfies in unique artistic settings.
- January 27: National Geographic Day - This day celebrates the famous magazine known for its stunning photography and storytelling. It's ideal for landscape and wildlife photographers to share their images with an educational narrative.
- January 31: Inspire Your Heart with Art Day - A day for all creatives, including photographers, to share their passion projects, discuss what inspires their work, or highlight the art that moves them.

Well, that's it for now. Stay well, stay warm and happy shooting!

Your President,  
Keith O'Leary

## **APC ACTIVITIES - January 2026**

- **Club Meeting**      **January 19, 2026**

## APC Board with Contact Info



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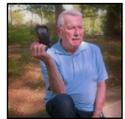
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Newsletter

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## Programs for 2026

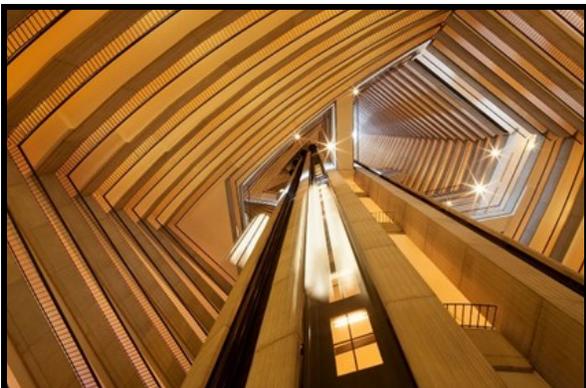
By John Reach

- 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 - Ann Parks of Ann Marson Annstracts  
Subject - Abstract Photography
- September - Steve Dingeldein  
Subject - Astrophotography
- November - TBD

## January 2026 Program—Landscape Photography

By Sterling Stevens

Sterling E. Stevens is a New Jersey native whose curiosity for photography emerged while studying architecture in Texas and North Carolina. Eventually picking up the camera for hobby, Sterling's imagery quickly revealed acute empathy for his surroundings combined with a trained aesthetic sensibility. Within a few years, he emerged as an award-winning fine artist and transitioned careers from design to professional photography. Today, Sterling lives between Raleigh, NC and San Antonio, TX, operating throughout the southern United States as an architectural photographer.



## --- PhotoShow 2026 Kickoff ---

### *Thru the Lens: Then or Now*

As we begin a new PhotoShow year, I'm excited to introduce our 2026 theme: ***Thru the Lens: Then or Now***. This theme is an invitation to reflect on where we've been, explore where we are now, and celebrate the many ways we see the world through photography.

Each PhotoShow will feature a new monthly theme, and members may choose how they wish to interpret it. You can create a **brand-new image** inspired by the theme—or revisit a photograph from your existing catalog that fits it. Think of it as choosing between a **Vintage Vision** or a **Fresh Focus**. Both approaches are equally valued and equally creative.

This format is intentional. Based on what I've learned over the years—and from serving as PhotoShow Chair last year—it's designed to encourage participation, flexibility, and creative freedom. It allows photographers to work within their comfort zones while also highlighting something truly special in our club: the depth and quality of work many of you have already created. Creativity isn't limited to the moment the shutter is pressed; rediscovering, reinterpreting, and re-editing past images can be just as inspiring as capturing something new.

I'd especially like to invite members who haven't participated in PhotoShows before to join in this year. While we've benefited from a strong core group of regular contributors, our club is filled with talented photographers whose images deserve to be seen. Many exceptional photographs already exist—waiting for the right theme or the right moment to be shared. Looking back often brings fresh perspective and meaningful conversation, while new images keep us experimenting and growing.

Whether you choose *then* or *now*, the goal is the same: to share our work, learn from one another, and celebrate photography together. I'm looking forward to seeing how each of you interprets the themes throughout the year.

PhotoShows will be held in **February, April, June, August, and October**. Theme details and submission information will be shared in upcoming newsletters—this is your invitation to start looking through your lens... then or now.

# February PhotoShow – “Member’s Choice”

David Hall, PhotoShow Chair

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This month is “Member’s Choice”. Everyone can submit up to 3 photos.

The photos can be of anything you want. They can be new photos, ones from your catalog of photos or a combination. There are no restrictions or requirements. Any questions about what can be submitted or the theme, please send them to:

[apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com)

## Submission Guidelines:

Number of Entries: Up to Three (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](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com)

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

Example: Photos for (Month) Photoshow – John Doe

Entry Deadline: Sunday February 8, 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](mailto: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.***



## WEBMASTER NOTES

### Renew Membership Online!

For your convenience you can renew your membership online via a credit card:

- Go to [www.alamancephoto.com](http://www.alamancephoto.com)
- Click on Join/Renew in the menu bar under the Membership Tab.
- Click on Renew button.
- Choose Membership Level.
- Follow the instructions to complete payment.
- You will receive a receipt in your inbox!

**Christie O'Leary—Webmaster**



## APC Membership Corner

January, 2026

Happy New Year!!!

Hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday. As we start the New Year, remember that the 2026 membership renewal has started, please pay your annual dues by the end of March. Also, remember to invite family, friends and others from our community who may be interested in becoming a part of the photo club. By becoming and remaining an active member, you will be among a group of like-minded individuals, as well as accessing activities and events to help fulfil your photography goals.

To renew membership, the following are ways to assist you with paying your annual dues:

1. you can pay by credit card online at [www.alamancephoto.com](http://www.alamancephoto.com), 2. by check made to: Alamance Photography Club or 3. by cash to the Club's Treasurer - George Siple at a monthly meeting. Dues are \$42 for an individual, \$62 for a family (same household), and \$15 for a student.

This year there will be a combination of workshops, photo shows by some of our very own members, and field trips. See our calendar of meetings and upcoming events in each Newsletter.

**Remember: Potential members are free to attend up to 2 monthly meetings before deciding to join!**

**Resi Forrest – Membership Chair**

[apcmembers2@gmail.com](mailto:apcmembers2@gmail.com)



Photo by Randy Grosch



Photo by Julie Johnson

## APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns ([raymunns@bellsouth.net](mailto:raymunns@bellsouth.net)) no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

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For sale: a Canon EOS R8 camera (bought in 2024) that comes with a 24 - 50 mm lens, a 128 GB card from SanDisk, Canon battery and charger. Also, a non-Canon carrying case. It is in good shape.

Asking \$1,000 --- B&H photo sells this model for \$1300 and up. eBay's prices start at \$1,000 for body only and go up from there.

Contact Stephan Kiefer at: [stephankiefer@mac.com](mailto:stephankiefer@mac.com)

# 6 Tips for Photographing Winter

By Christian Hoiberg



## *Make the most out of winter with these tips*

I've always loved winter and grew up skiing and playing in the snow but as a photographer, it took me years to really appreciate it.

Perhaps it was because I was young when I started and didn't have a means of getting around, or perhaps my vision has changed or evolved since.

Anyhow, that's not the case anymore. Winter has become my favorite season to photograph. The constantly changing weather and beautiful layer of snow can make even the most ordinary landscapes something special.

Photographing during this time of year comes with its challenges, though. Keep reading and we'll take a closer look at how you can create more compelling images of winter.

## **#1 There's no Bad Weather**

It might be tempting to stay at home in front of the fireplace with a cup of hot chocolate when it's a full-on snowstorm outside but you might want to consider going out with the camera.

This type of weather is part of what makes winter special. Especially if you're in the Northern Hemisphere.

## **6 Tips for Photographing Winter . . . Continued**

Whiteouts and snowstorms offer great opportunities for landscape photographers. It's the perfect time to capture the true colors of winter.

Some of my favorite winter images have been captured in "bad" weather when it was more tempting to stay at home. I'll admit it's an internal battle to go outside on those days but I rarely regret it.

If you're in a full-out snowstorm, you can try experimenting with the shutter speed to see how this affects the snow.

### **#2 Isolate the Main Subject**

One of the most efficient steps you can take to create more compelling winter images is to isolate the main subject. Make it obvious what you're photographing.

Take this image at the right as an example. There's little doubt what the main subject is. This is thanks to the main subject standing alone and isolated from distracting elements.

Isolating the main subject is a powerful compositional technique for winter photography

Being able to isolate a subject takes some trial and error. You need to be careful when setting

up the composition. Take a close look at the image preview and see if there are any distracting elements that are overlapping with the main subject.



What about the background? Is your subject blending in or standing out? This is perhaps the trickiest part. Sometimes you simply need to wait for the 'right' conditions. The image above, for example, wouldn't be the same if it wasn't a whiteout and you could see the forest behind.

Isolating subjects is a powerful compositional technique in general but it works extra good for winter photography.

## *6 Tips for Photographing Winter . . . Continued*

### **#3 Watch Your Step!**

It's easy to get carried away and run around looking for new compositions but I strongly recommend that you mind your steps. Especially when photographing in fresh snow.

Take a few minutes to look around and consider what you're going to photograph and from which perspective it's most likely that you'll be positioned.

When you've got an idea of what your approach will be, walk carefully towards the desired composition and avoid making unnecessary tracks in the snow. Take a detour if necessary.

Avoid making unnecessary tracks in the fresh snow – it will cause a lot of extra work or ruin an otherwise good photo.

Failing to do so will give you a lot of extra work in post-processing and can, in the worst case, ruin an otherwise great image.

Remember, you want your images to have as few distracting elements as possible. Unintentional footprints are one of these elements you want to get rid of.



### **#4 There are 24 Hours of Opportunities**

As landscape photographers, we often hear that good images are only captured during the Golden Hour. It might be true that this time of day has a photogenic light but it's not true that it's the only time you should be taking images.

TJ Thorne says it best in his eBook 'There's No Such Thing as Bad Light'. Good light is all around us.



This is especially true during winter. The opportunities are equally great during day and night. Even a blue sunny sky with harsh light can result in interesting images when you're in a winter wonderland.

Night Photography can be extremely rewarding during the winter months – if you dare to brave the freezing temperatures.

## **6 Tips for Photographing Winter . . . Continued**

Personally, my favorite times to photograph winter are at night or midday on a snowy day. There's not much that's more exciting than hiking in a snow-covered landscape with a star-filled sky above your head and perhaps even the odd possibility of some northern lights.

### **#5 Use a Cold White Balance**

Those that have done photography for a while are well aware that the White Balance can easily be adjusted in post-processing and has little to say when you're photographing in RAW.

If you're anything like me, though, you like doing as much as possible in-camera to give yourself a better starting point when the editing begins.

Adjusting the White Balance does exactly that: give you a better starting point. You'll find that a cold White Balance does best for most winter images.

An Iceberg in Greenland Captured with a Cold White Balance



An Iceberg in Greenland with a Warm White Balance



Yes, a colorful sunrise or sunset can benefit from a warmer setting but keep in mind that you're not photographing the Bahamas. A warm value will quickly make the snow look dirty.

Setting the White Balance to a cold value will help enhance the true winter atmosphere.

## *6 Tips for Photographing Winter . . . Continued*

### **#6 Look for Textures in the Foreground**

Winter brings a lot of opportunities when it comes to finding interesting and unique foregrounds. Take the image below as an example.

This shot wouldn't have been possible had it not been for the freezing temperatures and cracked ice.

The low tide revealed interesting foregrounds as the thin ice cracked.

It's easy to think that all foregrounds are gone when the landscape is covered in snow but this is far from the truth. The fresh snow can be a great foreground itself. You can also look for cracked ice, patterns in the snow or ice, frozen lakes, or elements that are penetrating the snow.



This is yet another reason why it's important to slow down and observe your surroundings before you begin photographing winter. You'll be surprised by what you find!

### **Bonus Tip: Bring Extra Batteries**

It's no secret that battery lives are dramatically shortened when temperatures drop below freezing. I'm sure you've experienced this yourself. It's even more noticeable when using Live View.

There are ways to extend battery life when photographing winter but I strongly recommend that you always keep a couple of extra batteries in your pocket or backpack.

Personally, I always bring a minimum of two spare batteries no matter what. If I'm planning to stay out for several hours, I'll bring even more.

### **Conclusion**

Winter is a great season for landscape photographers who are willing to brave the cold and stormy weather. It's a time where you're able to really capture the elements.

At the end of the day, the most important advice is to have fun. Take the time to appreciate the time spent outdoors and try not to stress too much about doing everything 'technically correct'. Let the surroundings speak to you, then photograph what you're inspired by.

That being said, remembering these tips can help you in capturing even better images.

# What Photography Teaches You—If You Let It

By Justin Tedford



Photography goes beyond just composition and exposure—it's a lifelong process of patience, failure, curiosity, and self-exploration. After years of practice, you'll see that it's not only about what's in front of your camera but also about what occurs behind it. Here are 10 lessons every photographer discovers.

## Gear Doesn't Make the Photographer



A few learn this early on, while for most it takes a few years or more. Blame the manufacturers' marketing for this one. Do we really need the newest camera or lens? No. The best camera is the one you have with you and know how to use. It really comes down to understanding the limitations of the

gear you have. Once you know how far you can push your camera in the field and during editing, life as a photographer gets easier. Connecting to your subject or the scene in front of your lens will enable you to create some of the best images you've ever taken. It's about connection and confidence, not megapixels.

## *What Photography Teaches You—If You Let It . . . Continued*

### **Light Is Everything**

One of the biggest skills you should master is light. Light is the most significant element in our photography, allowing us to tell the story in many different ways, more so than any other element besides our subject. Understanding the direction, quality, and color of light helps us convey emotion. This enables us to communicate to our viewers what we are trying to say in our work. At some point, you'll start to see the light before anything else, and how it interacts with the scene more than any other element in the photograph.



### **Patience Outranks Talent**

Anyone can learn photography, and there are others for whom it comes naturally—one thing that is hard to teach: patience. Photography rewards those who wait for light, people, and moments. It takes extra time to wait for the light to be in the right spot or for the peak action moment to occur. Being present in the moment overrules quick reflexes and snapping a photo. Knowing how to anticipate the moments before they appear and where to be matters; occasionally, it's pure luck. Being able to look into the near future and try to anticipate what may happen gives you the time to prepare and envision what you want to achieve.



## *What Photography Teaches You—If You Let It . . . Continued*

### **The Real Teacher Is Failure**

A missed shot is like rubbing salt in an open wound, but it sharpens intuition. The missed shots, improper exposures, and the occasional poor judgment are the gaps where growth begins. Once you miss that excellent shot, you'll never forget it and learn from what happened. Naturally, we hate failure, as it can exacerbate



imposter syndrome. You start to question whether what you are doing is correct, and you begin to belittle yourself and your worth as a photographer. Take failure by the horns, and growth will explode; noticeable artistic growth will follow.

### **Editing Starts Before the Shutter Clicks**

With time comes experience, and with experience, you stop shooting everything. You will start to edit mentally, looking over a scene, studying it, and deciding if it's worth storing on the memory card. This is where you mature as a photographer. Intent has finally entered the room. When you think about taking a photograph, you dissect the scene—looking at all the elements, deciding what should stay and what should go. Each decision is made with intent before you click the shutter. You envision the final scene, and ultimately, the decisions made in the field allow for less time spent behind the computer screen editing.

### **You Can't Please Everyone (And You Shouldn't Try To)**

In a world where we chase likes on social media for instant gratification, we forget why we started photography. For some, becoming an influencer in the industry seems like a glamorous life. One thing happens: you start creating work for others and not yourself, and you lose your voice. Once you realize that you cannot



please everyone, your images start sounding like you again. They say if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck. Authenticity is the same; people can smell when your authenticity is fake, and it lasts longer than approval. I quit shooting weddings because it was evident in my work. The money is good, but if I am ready to leave before it even starts, I have to ask myself one question: Why am I doing this? That was all I needed.

## *What Photography Teaches You—If You Let It . . . Continued*

### **It's Not about Perfection**

I am not sure about you, but I started photography for the creativity. For me, it's being able to take a vision, plug it into a camera, create an image, and then enhance it in Lightroom before making a final print. With that said, why are we always chasing technically perfect photos? Not every image has



to be technically perfect. Imperfection is authentic, and feeling does not have to equal sharpness. When we chase technical perfection, we start to lose our artistic voice. We then lose what we started—our creativity. If you're in photography for the money—hopefully not—you're here for the wrong reasons.

### **Your Voice Takes Time**



If you want to master or improve, there is one thing that you cannot override, and that is time. You can't rush time, and it is one thing we cannot control. You hear "find your style" all the time. I felt like every time I tried to find my style, it made things more complicated. I stopped chasing my style and con-

cluded that it takes time. I don't believe you can create a style overnight. It comes with time and experience. Over time, it emerges through mistakes, repetition, and honesty. Let go of time and stop chasing style; what you want to say through your work is there. It just takes time to emerge, so don't rush it.

## *What Photography Teaches You—If You Let It . . . Continued*

### **The Photograph You Don't Take Matters Too**

Maturity in photography lies in restraint and intent. These two qualities separate hobbyists from passionate photographers. Knowing when not to click the shutter speaks volumes. You have now entered a level that I don't think many really conquer. It takes a great deal of maturity to decide to click the shutter



and create an image—not just to capture an image and document a moment for the sake of taking a photograph—because one can. The next time you are thinking about clicking the shutter, ask yourself, “Is this really worth the time?”

### **You Never Truly Arrive**

Many things in life come to an end. Photography is not a single thing; it's a lifelong journey of learning with no finish line, only evolution. I recently reviewed a ton of old work on my Facebook page and thought to myself, “I have improved.” I am one of those who tries not to look back. The past is the past, and it is what it is; I can't change it. At times, I think I haven't really made much improvement. I wouldn't say I have improved, but evolved. I can see my interests change over time, as well as my style of work. Remember, this is a journey that never ends.

### **The Journey Is the Point**

Photography isn't just about perfecting a skill; it's about enhancing your awareness. As your awareness grows, mastery of the craft will naturally follow. Next time you're out taking photos, slow down, focus with intention, and pay closer attention. Every click of the shutter becomes a moment of self-discovery, not only revealing the world but also more about yourself.



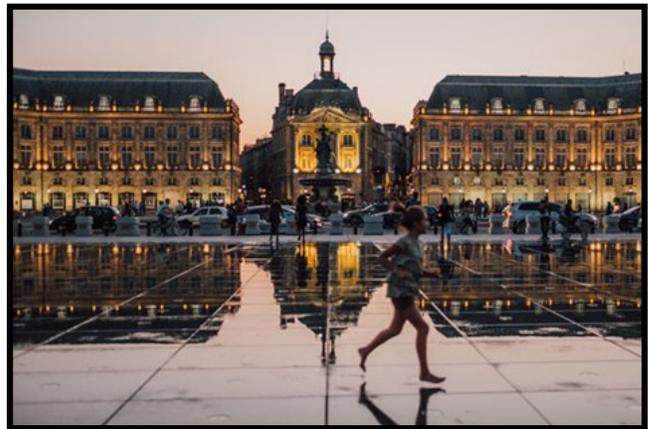
# Rain, Reflections, and the City

## Urban Photography on Wet Days

By Richard Schneider

Often seen as an inconvenience, rainy days can in fact be a goldmine for photography enthusiasts, particularly those who love to capture urban landscapes. With the right techniques, what could be a gloomy, wet day transforms into a playground of vibrant reflections, textures, and strikingly beautiful scenes. Here are some essential tips to make the most of your rainy day urban photography.

*Photo captured by Guillaume Flandre; 23mm,  
f/1.4, 1/500s, ISO 800*



### 1. Gear Up

First and foremost, protecting your camera gear is a priority. There are many weather-sealed camera bodies and lenses available on the market, but if you don't own one, don't worry. A rain cover for your camera will do just fine and is usually quite affordable. For a makeshift solution, even a plastic bag can be useful, provided you handle your equipment carefully. Don't forget an umbrella or a waterproof jacket to keep yourself dry and comfortable.

### 2. Embrace Reflections

One of the most spectacular things about photography on a rainy day is the appearance of reflections. Wet surfaces, puddles, and glass panes become mirrors reflecting the city's life in a different perspective. Reflections can bring a surreal and artistic touch to your photos. Look for those perfect puddles and use them to create a dramatic impact by including city structures, lights, and even pedestrians.

## *Rain, Reflections, and the City Urban Photography on Wet Days . . . Continued*

### **3. Look for Details**

Rain transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary. Raindrops on a railing, wet footprints on the pavement, beads of water on a café window – these details may seem mundane but can add depth to your photography. Focusing on these minute details can give your viewers a fresh perspective on the familiar urban environment.



*Photo captured by Alexei Maridashvili*

### **4. Play with Light**

Rainy days might seem dark and gloomy, but they are filled with unique lighting opportunities. The overcast sky acts as a giant diffuser, providing a soft, even light that's perfect for capturing the city's character. The vibrant city lights become even more pronounced in the rain, especially at dusk or night. The contrasting lights and the dark environment create high drama and ambiance in your images.

### **5. Capture Movement**

The hustle-bustle of the city is amplified on rainy days. People dashing with umbrellas, vehicles splashing water, raindrops trickling down window panes – these movements can add a dynamic touch to your photos. Using a slow shutter speed will let you play around with motion blur, conveying a sense of speed and urgency that aligns with the mood of a rainy day.

## *Rain, Reflections, and the City Urban Photography on Wet Days . . . Continued*

### **6. Experiment with Black and White**

Black and white photography and rainy days make for a potent combination. It brings out the mood, contrasts, and textures in a more pronounced manner. Particularly in an urban setting, black and white can amplify the timeless character of the cityscape, making your photographs dramatic and intense.



Photo captured by masahiro miyagi

### **7. Post-Processing**

Finally, don't forget the power of post-processing. You can enhance the moodiness of your rainy day pictures by adjusting the contrast, sharpness, and saturation. Experimenting with various filters can also highlight the different elements you've captured.

Rainy days offer a unique canvas for your urban photography. While the rest retreat indoors, it's your chance to step out and explore the city from a refreshed and renewed perspective. Happy shooting!

PICTURECORRECT.com

*RM*



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Alamance Photography Club  
is an affiliate of Alamance Arts