

Focus Group Camera Club

Photographers sharing their knowledge and experiences

Focus Newsletter

December 2015 Vol 3 #6

President’s Column - Stephen Retherford

SHOW & TELL

“Show & Tell” was always one of my favorite activities in grade school. It was a time for the kids to take over briefly from the teacher and teach one another about the world as we experienced it. It was unscripted and unrehearsed. One kid would bring an Indian head penny given to him by his grandfather. Another kid would bring in a rock he found in his yard. Another would tell the tale of Thanksgiving dinner at her aunt’s house. We would take turns standing in front of the classroom for our brief presentations and answer questions from the curious audience. The concept probably came into use in public schools in the 1940’s although the terminology is older. Shakespeare used it (“...for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds....” – *Coriolanus*, Act II, Scene 3).

At the last meeting we reintroduced the old tradition of the club for Show & Tell in which we devote some time between the formal presentation of the evening and Round Table for club members to introduce members to new gear, photographic solutions, techniques, news, opportunities, etc., that they think might be of use or interest to our fellow club members. If you were at the meeting you may recall it started off a little slowly but suddenly took off. We almost ran out of time.

If the membership is agreeable we’ll make this a regular part of the club agendas. But remember, like Round Table and the newsletter, this part of the program is participatory and depends on your contributions. We don’t expect you to show us your wounds and tell us your deeds but if you have some photographic equipment to sell, this is the time to stand up and make a pitch. If you are aware of some photo opportunity or contest coming up, this is the time to let your fellow FGCC members know. If you have discovered a solution to some problem you’ve had with your camera or photo editing, this is the time to share that discovery. If you have some new piece of photographic equipment you want to show off, bring it and show it off. Keep in mind there are others who will follow you and we will have just ten to fifteen minutes between the presentation and Round Table for this part of the program. So keep your contribution brief and to the point but don’t hesitate to share.

We all look forward to hearing what you have to offer at the next meeting and the meeting after that

Focus is published bi-monthly by the Focus Group Camera Club of Richmond

Club Meetings are held::
Second Tuesday 7:30 PM
River Road Presbyterian Church
8960 River Road.
Richmond

Stephen Retherford President

Ed Fuhr Vice President

Durwood Felton Secretary

Gilpin Brown Treasurer

Bob Coles Chief Editor.

Frank Feigert Copy Editor

Ron Ratcliffe Publishing

Advantages of using the Adobe subscription for Photoshop

By Al Warfield

I know that a lot of FGCC members and other photographers have a real problem with the \$9.99/month fee for Photoshop CC and Lightroom. I felt that way at first too. But then I realized that CS6 is not going to get any better, while CC is getting better at least once a month. So I signed up at the end of 2013. We also have CS6 on one computer, and CS5 on the FGCC laptop. So I can actually see the differences between the old and the new. I am consistently impressed with Photoshop CC.

Not every aspect of CC is better. For instance I can move or copy files around in Bridge that comes with CS5 or CS6 just as well as with Bridge that comes with CC. But if I go to Camera Raw and use the save dialog, in CC I can save to any folder in my computer, also resize, change the PPI, change to a jpg, Tiff, DNG, etc. If I set the width and height in pixels I can select files in portrait or landscape orientation and they will be sized correctly in the folder desired. That is not possible in CS5 or 6. You can only save to the same folder, and you can't resize, etc. So you have to do that manually, with an action in Photoshop, or using a separate dialog.

There are a lot of other advantages, including the Welcome screen that comes up in PhotoshopCC when it's opened, unless you turn it off. I do turn it off normally, unless I want to see the tutorials that explain what the new features do and how to use them. OK, you can Google for that info and probably get it, but it's much easier if you use the Welcome screen.

One example of a new feature is the inclusion of a pair of check boxes in the panorama dialog. One is for automatic Content-aware fill of a panorama that uses the original raw files to access the content for the fill. The other checkbox is for color matching of the fill with the adjacent colors. These changes improve Content-Aware-Fill to the point that this technique is almost always perfect. Previously it took a lot of work to make it match the initial panorama.

The only way to realize the advantages is to sign up for the subscription. It's really not much different that the old system of coming out with a new version every year or two that cost more each time, and the updates are continuous as opposed to never.

FGCC Exhibitions at SunTrust

by Debra Roberts

Exhibiting at the SunTrust Building in beautiful downtown Richmond for the past three years has been wonderful. The Gallery is beautiful, well lit, and easily seen and enjoyed by everyone who walks into the bank building. (In addition, it uses the traditional nail-&-hook hangers, making it simple and quick to achieve dramatic results.)

Each year we have chosen a slightly different way to group the photographs. In 2015, we chose to hang them by artist, rather than by subject matter. The reactions of visitors showed us that we should continue that practice. Hanging several pieces of one photographer together, separated slightly from those of other photographers, allowed each of us to explore and demonstrate our vision and our style. We noticed that visitors spent more time in the gallery, and stayed to visit with us and talk about our work. It was a particularly satisfying opening, for both photographers and visitors.

As many of you know, SunTrust has hopes and plans for the future of this high-traffic first-floor location. We are likely to have only one more year to exhibit in this beautiful gallery. If we are allowed by SunTrust to exhibit in June 2016, I encourage everyone to seize the opportunity to participate. You'll receive announcements and emails as soon as we confirm our gallery reservation.

Member News

Cyane Lowden is in a show, “Size Matters,” as the Glavé-Kocen Gallery, 1620 West Main Street, in Richmond. She will have 4 prints (“or rather interpretations”) from her trip to France. The show runs January 8-30 and is open Tuesday – Saturday.

In case you missed it, the Richmond Times Dispatch had one of Ed Fuhr’s photos on the editorial page of Saturday’s paper, 12/12/2015. It was “Daybreak on Bacon Hollow” via Scenic Virginia;

<http://scenicvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/hm-mountains-daybreak-on-bacon-hollow-edward-fuhr-high-res.jpg>

FGCC Calendar

- 1/5/16 – Board meeting
 - 1/6/16 – Pickup photographs from Richmond Public Library / Deliver to Virginia General Assembly
 - 1/12/16 – Club Meeting – David Everette Member Critique Night - This is always a highlight for the club. Please respond to David's recent solicitation for images!!
 - 1/24/16 (Sunday) – Annual pizza party at Cindy and Charles’ house beginning at 4:00.
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- 2/2/16 – Board meeting
 - 2/9/16 – Club Meeting – Alex Nyerges, VMFA Director & Roundtable
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- 3/1/16 – Board Meeting
 - 3/8/16 – Club Meeting – Member Showcase, moderated by John Garofalo & Roundtable
 - 3/12/16 – Pickup photographs from VA General Assembly mid-March – exact date TBA
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- 4/5/16 – Board Meeting
 - 4/12/16 – Club Meeting
-

- 5/3/16 – Board Meeting
 - 5/10/16 – Club Meeting
-

- 6/7/16 – Board Meeting
- 6/14/16 – Club Meeting or Suntrust Reception



by **Rob Sabatini**

Although the preholiday season has been unseasonably balmy, the show must go on in the world of migrating waterfowl. For the past few years I have become addicted to the hobby of chasing and photographing ducks and have written this piece to highlight a sample of the beautiful species I have found in their temporary Virginia homes.

Ducks are particularly skittish birds, as one would expect from animals whose primary interactions with humans have historically occurred on the wrong end of shotguns. Unfortunately for photographers, the sharp visual acuity of these birds does not seem discriminating enough to tell the difference between the dreaded shotgun and a tripod. It is difficult to get close to wild ducks, and equally difficult to photograph them.

One problem is that many of the locations that migrating ducks frequent in this area are private or public properties on which they are hunted, limiting access for the photographer. Another photographic challenge is that some of the most beautiful species have feather patterns that range from very dark to white in color, making proper exposure a daunting task. And most frustrating is their uncanny ability to stay just out of range of the camera, as if they know the exact focal length of the lens being used.

Through a combination of research, field study, camouflage, and long hours hiding in dirty places on cold days for grueling hours, I have found increasing success in capturing images of these beautiful creatures. Here are just a few.

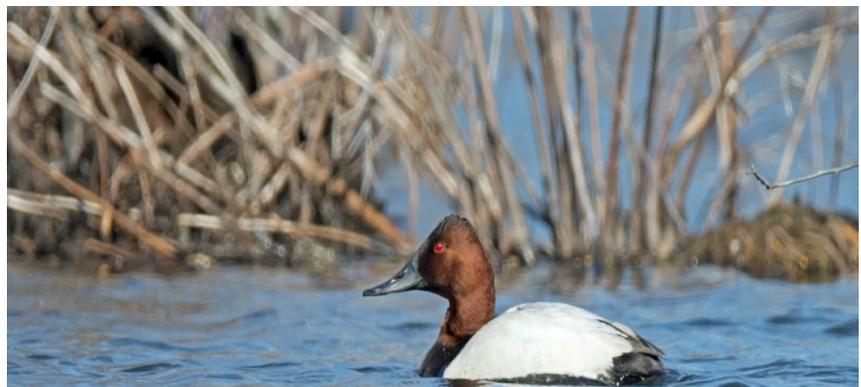


Ring Neck Duck

Dutch Gap Conservation
Area, Chester, VA

Canvasback

Dutch Gap Conservation
Area, Chester, VA





Hooded Merganser

i
Chincoteague National
Wildlife Refuge, VA



Northern Shovelers

Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chester, VA



American Wigeon

Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Chester, VA

Gadwall

Midlothian Mines Lake,
Midlothian, VA



Wood Duck

Dutch Gap
Conservation Area,
Chester, VA



Learned the Hard Way ...

by *Vicky Eicher*

Should you ever have the opportunity to photograph a dog sled race, keep this in mind....

Last March my friend invited me to come to Fairbanks, AK, to photograph the start of the 968 mile 2015 Iditarod dog sled race! So I was on the [almost] next plane out, arriving a few days before the mushers and their gear. Together Shirley and I scouted out various vantage points and decided I would be at the actual Starting Gate.

Choose your spot carefully. Our options were:

-- on the porch of a local restaurant that fronted the frozen river. But the restaurant was closed for the season, so there was no shelter or respite from wind and cold. And no guarantee that the owners would open the restaurant to spectators on race morning. Friends who went there reported that we made a good decision.

-- the race began in town and went straight down city streets before taking a 90 degree turn, next to a deep ditch! Local mushers unsuccessfully tried to get Iditarod organizers to re-route the racers away from this corner, arguing that the turn was too sharp for 16-member dog sled teams, well-rested and moving fast; they could easily tip over and land in the ditch! Fortunately this did not happen. Seeing them navigate this sharp turn promised many photo ops, from an interesting angle. But on race day, authorities moved all of the watchers to the other side of the road.

-- dogs, sleds and mushers flying over snow banks as the teams left the road and entered the frozen river for the first long trek of the race. Hmm. Standing on a frozen river for three plus hours. Hmm. The ice was strong enough for the racers, but two folks in a snowmobile weren't so lucky and had to be pulled out of the icy water!

-- the starting line itself. After all, I was there to photograph the start so

Now for the lessons.

First -- mushers officially begin the race when their sled crosses the starting line, and not when the lead dog crosses it. My "perfect spot," right behind the VIPs and the TV cameras, turned out to be too close! When the sled came up to the starting line, half of the dogs were to my right, while the other half and the sled, were to my left!

Second -- Fairbanks folks love winter sports, and this was only the second time the Iditarod would begin there, so locals would join the sports press crowding the starting gate and chute, right? Wrong. The approximately ½ mile starting chute was three people deep on either side of the start - during the three hour starting sequence!

Third -- people would flock to the starting chute early to get good viewing positions, right? Wrong again. Shirley was a volunteer Dog Handler who had to be there at 6:30 am, and she expected me to stay in the warm hotel lobby until just before 10:00 am when the first musher crossed the starting line. But I staked out my "perfect" viewing spot. [See points #1 and #2]

Fourth -- expect to be c-c-c-cold and dress accordingly, including those chemical hand and foot warmers. Shirley dressed me in her extra Arctic weather gear, which really helped. And don't forget to take care of your gear! I had two cameras, semi-protected outside my coat, and extra batteries in my coat pockets. It was two degrees F at 6:30 am and a balmy four degrees F six hours later when the last contestant crossed the starting line!

Fifth -- mushers set out one team at a time, according to a random draw a few nights earlier. Each team has x minutes to reach the starting line from the staging area, settle down their dogs, and double check everything, before they start. The dogs are rested and jumping all over with excitement, so lines get tangled, the dogs toss their booties, etc. One Dog Handler lost control of a dog which threw its lead, then had to be caught and reattached to its pull line -- while the starting clock ticked down! Somehow no one started late.

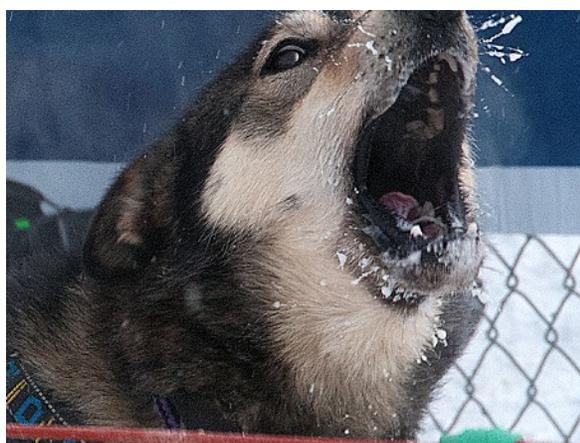
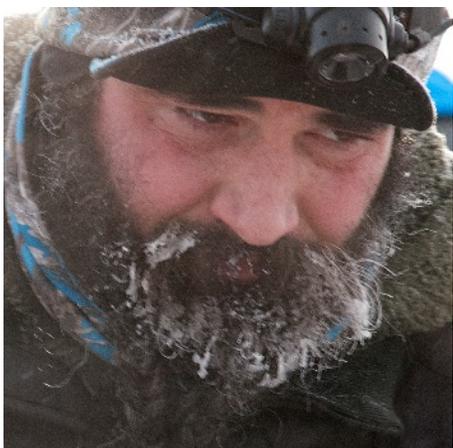
Sixth -- mushers can be colorful at the start. One, a breast cancer survivor, wore a flamingo pink parka and her dogs wore matching booties! Another wore a Dr. Seuss "Cat in the Hat" chapeau as he began the race!

Seventh -- don't be glued to one spot. After about a third of the mushers began, I moved down the chute, climbed a snow bank, and tried some overhead shots for awhile; then moved further down the chute where there was a turn, and shot the final starters from ground level on up to get some good angles.

Eighth -- check out the helpers and the audience. At two degrees F, breath freezes individual hairs in beards, etc.! And some spectators wear strange headgear!

Ninth -- buy your souvenirs no later than the day before the big race! The Official Iditarod Souvenir Shop packed up and moved out hours before the race began!

Above all, have fun.



Note hat camera above.

Driver was filming for Google



Signs of the Times

Inspired by Frank



More Signs of the Times

Inspired by Frank





Frosty Leaf, taken by Bill Billings in 2002, on a Nikon E950 (pre-EXR days).

Here are some images from our recent trip to Greenland, Iceland and Copenhagen. Below are the descriptions and photo data.

Al and Linda Warfield



This is a garden situated among lava rocks. We stayed in this town about 1/4 mile from the garden. Canon 7D Mark II with Canon EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS lens@28 mm, ISO 2000, 1/200 sec@ f/11. Handheld.

Linda

This is a water feature in a square in Copenhagen, Denmark, September 2015. Canon 7D Mark II with Canon EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS lens@49 mm, ISO 1000, 1/1250 sec@ f/5.6. Handheld

Linda



Kuannit is on Disko Island in Western Greenland. The island consists of mostly basalt rock, which is hexagonal shaped columns of very heavy, dense rock. Canon 7D Mark II with Canon EF-28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS lens@60 mm, ISO 2000, 1/640 sec@ f/11. Handheld.

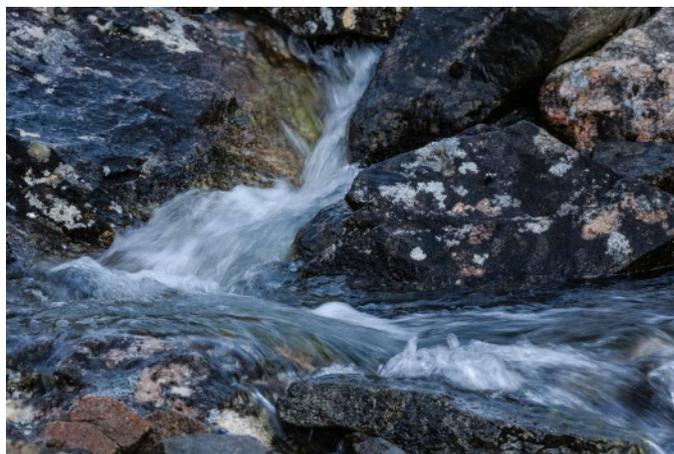
Linda

Warfield Con't

This is another shot of the basalt formations on Kuannit, showing the edge of Disko Bay with icebergs. Canon 7D Mark II with Canon EF-28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS lens@33 mm, ISO 2000, 1/2000 sec@ f/11. Handheld. Linda



The Northern Lights photographed from the sailing ship we spent about a week on in Greenland, September, 2015. The ship was moving at the time, and I used an ISO of 12800, 2 sec@f/4, Canon 24-105mm f/4 L lens at 24 mm, Canon 5D Mark III camera, handheld. Al



A waterfall on Appat Island in the Uminak area of western Greenland. 1/30 sec@f/11, 200 ISO, Canon 24-105mm f/4L lens@105mm, Canon 5D Mark III camera, on a tripod with a cable release.

Al

Warfield Con't

The edge of the fringe of land near the Ilulissat Icefjord, looking west over Disko Bay from a helicopter in western Greenland.

Canon 5D Mark III with Canon 24-105 mm f/4L lens@24 mm, ISO 1600, 1/2000 sec@ f/4. Handheld

An iceberg with a hole, on a Zodiac cruise in Umanak bay in the Umanak area of western Greenland.

Canon 5D Mark II with Canon 70-200mm f/2.8L lens@200 mm, ISO 1600, 1/2000 sec@ f/11. Light was coming through the berg as well.

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Three Japanese girls got in my picture just as the sun was in the best position for a shot, when I was in Ilulissat, Greenland. But I decided I liked the way the 3 girls were positioned in the image. This was looking west toward Disko Bay.

Canon 5D Mark III with Canon 70-200 mm f/2.8L lens@70 mm, ISO 400, 1/25 sec@ f/11. On tripod with cable release.

World War II in color

By Ron Ratcliffe

Back in the mid '70s someone was working at Hellers Camera in Bethesda MD and had a reference book with a color photo of the battleship Pennsylvania out in the Pacific, around 1944. The quality of the photo made it clear that it was shot with a large format camera, which is puzzling since most didn't think Kodachrome (the only modern color film of the time in the US) was available in sheet films.

An old Kodak hand (and WWII vet and radioman in Europe) revealed that they did have sheet Kodachrome, and that there was only one machine to process the film, located in Rochester.

Regarding these pictures, note the lack of basic safety equipment. I saw only one pair of safety glasses, and only a few of the workers were wearing gloves.

In viewing these pictures, note who the primary workers were that built the USA's WWII fighting machines. Also notice that most of the women were wearing lipstick and nail polish. WWII could not have been won without the woman of America stepping up to build the equipment needed to defeat the Axis powers.

Some of these images are 70 years old, and look as fresh as ever.

You wonder if any of the subjects in these photos were told that we'd have such a clear look at them in the year 2015.



February 1943. Working on the horizontal stabilizer of a "Vengeance" dive bomber at the Consolidated-Vultee plant in Nashville. 4x5 Kodachrome



August 1942. Mechanic Mary Josephine Farley works on a Wright Whirlwind motor in the Corpus Christi, Texas, Naval Air Base assembly and repairs shop. 4x5 Kodachrome transparency by Howard R. Hollem.



October 1942. Engine installers at Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach, California. 4x5 Kodachrome transparency by Alfred Palmer.