

THROUGH THE LENS

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February 2026

Strategies in Black/White Photography

By Jan Weld

I am certainly not a pro in monochrome photography, but I may have had more experience than a newcomer. Color sometimes distracts from an image. It is important for a monochrome picture to have good composition, texture and contrast. Images which may look good in black/white are often scenes or things with texture, fur, strong shadows, backlit subjects, repeated patterns, midday pictures. After I select an image to convert the monochrome, my workflow goes like this.

Begin in Camera Raw or Lightroom's Develop module. These programs are both the same. They do have more brightening/darkening options of manipulating the individual colors than Photoshop. The image opens in the basic screen where all adjustments are global, meaning all changes affect the entire image. Later, mask tools will be used to make specific

changes in various parts of the image. If the image is noisy, scroll down and click on "Denoise" under "Detail." Then do the following instructions.

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Apply global modifications-- adjustment as you would normally do for a color image:
Check the histogram: None of the red, green, blue indicators of light should be touching the right edge of the histogram. Section 1 may correct this.

1. Move the exposure slider for a good exposure; set the white/black points; adjust highlights/shadows. Sometimes I correct the horizon now or later in PS.

To set the white and black points for good contrast, hold down the Alt/Option button. The white point screen will turn black. Move the white point to the right until bits of color appear. Then move it back till screen is solid black. Depress Alt/Option key, move the black point to the left until colors appear on the white screen. Sometimes I slide till I like the look. When color shows on either screen, it indicates what areas are 100% white or 100% black. Adjust the highlights and shadows to brighten the shadows and/or turn down the highlights. Sometimes I do this before setting the black/white points.

2. Convert to Black/white

Click on the Black/White icon to convert to monochrome. Scroll down to the "Black and White Mix" section and start moving the color sliders back and forth to add or subtract the brightness/darkness levels of each color to my likeness. Afterwards, I may scroll up and adjust the highlights, shadows, whites & blacks I set earlier. All these changes are still global throughout the whole picture.

3. Masking: Local adjustments are done to parts of the image. Alter areas that need change to be more pleasing, more dramatic or emotional. Now the creating begins.

Click on the mask icon and choose what part of the picture to start correcting: Subject, background, sky, landscape (which can be broken down to vegetation, sky or sea). Several masks may be created by clicking on "Create New Mask". Other areas can be isolated even further with using a brush to paint over select parts of the image to modify them. A subject's eyes, face or anywhere in the picture could be improved.

Dodge and burn effects or techniques are produced by using linear and/or radial gradients. Usually, these gradients are applied with soft edges (100% feather) at lower opacities (density) and flow so changes blend into the scene in a natural, pleasing manner.

Linear gradient can be adjustments for the sides, top and /or bottom of the picture, straight across or diagonally. To avoid land or objects that become darkened by the gradient, click the "subtract" button & then use a brush to paint over the area not to be

included in the modified sky. When selecting a Subject and more needs to be include in the selection, click the “add” button and paint in the area to be included.

Radial gradients will make round or oval changes gradually in selected parts to alter brightness or darken areas. Sometimes it’s easier or more accurate to select a subject and then click “invert “ to select everything but the subject.

Once the area has been selected, move the exposure slider to add or subtract light/darkness by changing the exposure, shadow or highlight producing more drama. Other effects may be applied too by clicking the texture, clarity, and/or dehaze sliders, individually or collectively, for different effects. Click on the before/after icon(eyeball) to see how the edits appear.

When all masking is complete, return to the first screen where the global changes were made. (The button near the top right area with the square resembling 3 slider switches.) Then scroll down to check the boxes for “Remove chromatic aberration” and “Use profile corrections.” Most of the adjustments are complete. It is good practice to take a break and return to the image hours, perhaps days later to reexamine your work with a fresh pair of eyes. LR adjustments are all done on a virtual image so no harm to the raw image. Lightroom users may choose to continue in the Develop module.

I open in PS to remove distracting sensor spots or marks in Photoshop. I reevaluate the image to see if I’m satisfied with the changes I made. Sometimes, I use Nik’s “Silver Efex Pro 2” for more black and white affects. I want my image to have good composition, contrast and texture to produce drama or emotion in the image. If more changes are necessary, I can go to “Filter,” reopen Camera Raw to continue. I can stay in PS to make improvements using its single adjustments. I may crop the image in various sizes as a PSD. I may add a vignette to draw one’s eye to areas I want them to see more. I will save each duplicated image with the similar name but add “BW “and the cropped size as an unsharpened PSD. If I print or send the image as a jpeg, I will sharpen the main subject if there is one.

I hope you find this article helpful and understandable. Practice will make it easier, and you may develop better techniques with your experience.

From Glenn Kaupert

I happened across this blog post which I really enjoyed via LinkedIn a couple of weeks ago. I contacted Tom Parsons, the author/photographer for permission to add it into our newsletter and I've also added the url as well for those of you who would like to see it online. I urge you to check out his site and I hope you enjoy his words.

<https://www.tomparsons.co.uk/blog/the-case-for-the-silent-image>

The Case for the “Silent Image”

By Tom Parsons

In a world of “storytelling” and “project-based” photography, the idea that an image must justify its existence through a body of text can feel like a crutch for visual weakness. Here is a counter-narrative that champions the primacy of the visual.

The Tyranny of the Paragraph

Modern photography often suffers from what I call The Gallery Curse a mediocre, uncomposed image that only gains value once you read 300 words of sociological theory beside it. If an image requires a manual to be felt, it has failed as a visual medium. A truly great photograph should be an arresting full stop, not a comma leading to a sentence.

Composition as Content

There is a profound intellectualism in pure aesthetics. The way a subject catches the light in a portrait, or the balance of a composition, is the story. The narrative asks, who is this person? What are they thinking? Why are they there? The counter-narrative says look at the tension between shadow and highlight. Look at the geometry. The meaning is the emotional response to the form — not a biography of the subject.

Preserving the Mystery

By over-explaining a series, a photographer robs the viewer of their imagination. A rigid narrative provides a “correct” way to see the work. When an image stands alone, it

remains an open question. The viewer becomes a participant, filling the silence with their own history.

Technical Mastery is not “Surface”

We are often told that concept is king and craft is secondary. This is a false dichotomy. In documentary work especially, craft — timing, composition, the choice of aperture — is the soul of the work. A powerful image is a physical fact. It doesn't require a permit from a writer to be considered important. So what does mastery is not surface actually mean?

Craft as a Language

Technical skill isn't a coating applied after the fact; it is the language itself. Just as a writer uses grammar and vocabulary to convey nuance, a photographer uses aperture, shutter speed, and tonal range. When an image is perfectly timed, that “technical” success is what captures fleeting human emotion. Technique is the delivery system for feeling.

Intentionality

With technical mastery, every element in the frame exists by choice. Surface, making something look nice because you don't know any better. Mastery, choosing a specific depth of field or black-and-white grade to direct the viewer's eye with precision. Depth comes from control.

Respect for the Subject

In portraiture, technical mastery — lighting with intent, choosing the right lens for facial compression — is an act of respect. It shows you cared enough to render a human being with precision. To dismiss this as “surface” is to ignore the labour and focus required to translate a three-dimensional person into a two-dimensional image.

The “Invisible” Depth

A masterfully printed black-and-white image has physical presence — weight, texture, authority. That presence creates a visceral reaction before the brain starts searching for a story. This is depth you feel first, not read about later.

Summary

To say mastery isn't surface is to say that how a thing is made is part of what it means. In documentary work, truth is not only what you saw, but how you chose to render it through craft.

“I believe an image should earn your attention before you know its name. In a landscape of story-led photography, I advocate for the power of the frame itself. My work is not a puzzle to be solved with text; it is an observation of light, geometry, and human presence. If the image is strong enough, the words are redundant”.

#PortraitPhotography #VisualStorytelling #DocumentaryPhotography
#PhotographyPhilosophy #VisualLanguage #BlackAndWhitePhotography
#ContemporaryPhotography

Four Photography Rules Every Photographer Should Know

By Bob Reynolds

Photography has no shortage of opinions, presets, and shortcuts. But there are a few simple rules that have stood the test of time. These are not creative limits. They are starting points. Think of them as mental math you can do when the meter lies or when you want to work faster and more intentionally.

Reciprocal Rule

The reciprocal rule helps you avoid camera shake when shooting handheld. It gives you the slowest shutter speed you can reasonably use based on your focal length.

The idea is simple. Your shutter speed should be at least the inverse of your focal length.

If you are shooting a 50mm lens, aim for 1/50 or faster.

If you are shooting a 100mm lens, aim for 1/100 or faster.

Longer lenses magnify movement. Even small hand motion becomes visible. This rule is a baseline. Image stabilization, good technique, and modern sensors can let you cheat a bit. But when in doubt, start here.

Sunny 16 Rule

The Sunny 16 rule helps you estimate exposure without a light meter. It is especially useful outdoors when lighting is consistent.

On a bright sunny day, set your aperture to f16 and your shutter speed to the inverse of your ISO.

At ISO 100, your shutter speed is 1/100.

At ISO 200, your shutter speed is 1/200.

From there, you adjust the aperture based on conditions.

Sunny f16

Hazy f11

Cloudy f8

Overcast f5.6

Sunset f4

As you open the aperture, increase shutter speed to compensate. This rule builds intuition. Even if you use a meter, understanding this relationship helps you recognize when the camera is being fooled.

Looney 11 Rule

Looney 11 rule is for photographing the moon. Many photographers assume the moon is dark because the sky is dark. It is not. The moon is lit by direct sunlight.

Start with aperture at f11.

Set shutter speed to the inverse of your ISO. ISO 100 gives you 1/100.

ISO 200 gives you 1/200.

This produces a properly exposed moon with visible surface detail. From there, you adjust for moon phase, haze, or foreground elements. If your moon looks like a white blob, you are overexposing it.

The 500 Rule

The 500 rule is used in night sky photography to keep stars sharp without visible trailing.

Divide 500 by your focal length to find the longest shutter speed you can use.

With a 20mm lens, start around 25 seconds.

With a 50mm lens, start around 10 seconds.

If you are using a crop sensor, include the crop factor in the calculation.

For example, a 50mm lens on a 1.6 crop sensor becomes 500 divided by 80, which gives about 6 seconds.

This rule is a guideline, not a guarantee. High resolution sensors and large prints may require shorter times. But it gets you close fast, especially in the field.

Why These Rules Matter

These rules are not about perfection. They are about confidence. When you understand them, you stop guessing. You start making decisions with intent. The camera becomes a tool instead of a referee.

Use the rules. Break them when needed. But know where the baseline lives.

Program for 2026 to 2027—What's in it for you??

We hope it's what really interests you! We won't know that unless you help us plan. It may seem like a long time away, but these next few months is a better time to reach speakers and coordinate topics and schedules. Nancy Soos oversees programming the ACC meetings. She to fill programs that will benefit you. Would you like to learn something new or improve what you already know? Are your memories being captured the way you saw them? Do you have more time to pursue other photographic interests. Are your processing skills easy to do or confusing? The list goes on. Everyone has different interests, skill levels, past experiences, possible future endeavors. Would it be nice to learn from others or along with people you know? Everyone on the Board is trying to think what may interest you. I know there is much on YouTube but you might not know what to ask to find out how you enjoy photography even more. So please help us out by sharing your thoughts with Nancy. You can tell her at our meetings or email her at CatSoos@AOL.com

Photography Workshops: Are They for You?

by Rebecca Hagberg



When I retired over a decade ago, I started following a few photographers online, trying to figure out how they achieved such beautiful images. I noticed that one of these photographers had a last-minute cancellation in an upcoming workshop on the Island of Hawaii. Because I had spent 10 years in Hawaii during the 80s, the location caught my eye, and I contacted the photographer about the workshop. I was a “newbie” to photography at that point, having only an entry-level Nikon D3500, which had never been off the “auto” setting and no experience with a camera other than the point and shoot mode. I was assured that beginners were welcome, so I signed up for the workshop, rushing to find a tripod, some

filters, and a few other items on his suggested gear list. A month later, I flew to the Big Island and entered a world of creativity that has filled my life with amazing experiences, new friends, and more camera gear than I know what to do with. Since that time, I have attended many photo workshops and tours, learning more about the technical and artistic aspects of the field in each one. This article will offer suggestions for those who may want to take a workshop or tour.

Workshop vs. Tour

One of the first things to note is the difference between the two. A workshop offers instruction in classroom settings and in the field, along with getting you to photogenic locations at the right times of day. They are appropriate for all skill levels and provide instruction that often includes image reviews and post-processing sessions, along with some individual attention along the way. Workshops are generally smaller for these reasons.



A tour assumes you know how to photograph various subjects and gets you to more places but offers very little instruction. Tours cater to photographers who are already familiar with their equipment and simply want a guide to get them to the best spots.

Choosing a Workshop

So how does one go about selecting a workshop? In my experience, the best workshops are those which keep the number of guests as low as possible. A ratio of 1:6 or 1:8 is ideal. Sometimes you will find co-leaders, which allows for up to 12 participants comfortably. I have attended workshops with as few as 4, but these are generally workshops that have situations such as parking limitations, weather issues, or other extenuating circumstances.

Another consideration is the reputation of the lead photographers. Ask people you know for references, check online for reviews, and examine their websites for quality of photography before signing up.

Know your limits and your comfort level. Some workshops have very little walking from car to location, while others may hike for a mile or two. The description provided on the photographer's website should include detailed information about the physical exertion required. Some offer much more adventure than others, e.g., helicopter flights, kayaks, cruises, and the like. Others tend to carpool from one place to the next, stopping at pullouts along the road to photograph scenery. Knowing what activity level to expect is key in choosing a workshop.

Knowing what you will be photographing is also important. You can find workshops on just about any genre that interests you: landscapes, wildlife, macro, astrophotography, Milky Way, Aurora Borealis (or Aurora Australis), seascapes, old structures like barns or covered bridges, architecture, street photography, lightning, and other subjects. Look closer to home too for interesting experiences. The Chicago Botanic Garden and the Garfield Conservatory offer a wealth of gorgeous botanicals to fill your frame. Chicago Photography School schedules regular meetups throughout the city. You can find one- or two-day adventures in surrounding cities, parks, or states as well.

Be aware of what is included in the price and what you are responsible for. Check for any specialized gear you may need, such as hiking poles, filters, macro lenses, etc.,

and any special clothing you may need, such as extra layers for those -38° Canadian winters! Once you book a workshop, it's a good idea to buy trip insurance.

Benefits

One of the obvious benefits of signing up for a workshop is that the workshop leader has done all the scouting for you, saving you time in a new location. In addition to the iconic photo spots, a good leader will also know some out of the way spots where you can make original images. Another benefit of workshops and tours is learning from your fellow participants. I come home from each trip with several recommendations on gear, new workshop leaders, and locations. The enjoyment of shared experiences may be the most valuable thing you take home. Most of the photographers I've met have been generous with helpful suggestions, lots of laughs, and a shared passion for our art.

At that first Hawaii workshop I was fortunate to encounter a friendly and helpful group of photographers. During our meet and greet session on the first day, I introduced myself and my hometown and mentioned that I had little experience with a DSLR camera. A few introductions later, a gentleman introduced himself as Tom Snitzer, pointed at me, and said, "And I'm from Arlington Heights!" Turns out we live 5 miles from each other! Some of you members will know Tom from the presentations he has given to the club over the years. He and several others in that workshop helped me learn some basics of photography, enough to allow me to return home with a few decent images. Tom offered to help me after the workshop and suggested that I join the ACC and look around the Chicago area for photographers who do workshops locally. During my search I discovered Lou and Todd Nettlehorst, the Out of Chicago group, and Nick Sinnott's Chicago Photography Classes among others. I have remained friends with several people from my first workshop in Hawaii, and through them have connected with many more photographers to friends. We often schedule our own trips these days to



It was a spur of a moment!

By Jan Weld

A few ACC members and birding friends went to Lock & Dam 13 along the Mississippi River to see if there were any eagles left since the weather has been warming up. During frigid times, hundreds would be in trees and many actively engaged in hunting for fish near the dam. We were hopeful but didn't expect to see many now. We were pleasantly surprised to see approximately 10-15 eagles, both adult and juveniles still hanging around. Hunting and fishing weren't very frequent and mostly farther away. Due to the wind, many were flying away from us. We were pleasantly surprised to see 20, perhaps 30, white pelicans flying around. I was unaware they tolerated cold weather. They certainly were a bonus.

Various ducks: goldeneye and mallard ducks, mergansers, trumpet swans and white geese were gathered but all far away.

Another bonus was the delicious local café-restaurant, Steam Anchor, located in the small strip mall along IL-84 N/Waller Rd, 9 minutes from the dam. Excellent coffee, a good menu and scrumptious food, including four variations of wonderful scones!



Becki Hagberg



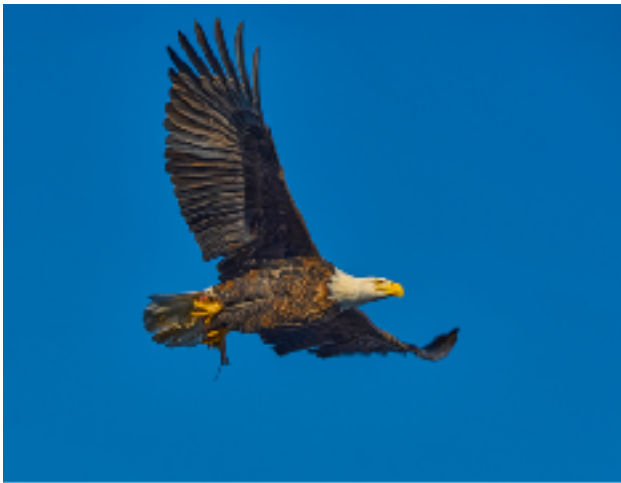
Becki Hagberg



Becki Hagberg



Glenn Kaupert



Glenn Kaupert



Sandy Tipton



Sandy Tipton



Sandy Tipton



Jan Weld



Jan Weld



Jan Weld



Reinhard Schwind



Reinhard Schwind

FEBRUARY COMPETITION RESULTS

SMALL COLOR PRINTS

Class	Maker	Title	Score	Honor
AA	Jan Weld	Big Foot	24	HM
AA	Jan Weld	Cooling Tiger	24	AW
A	Steve Seburn	Red Bellied Woodpecker	24	AW
A	Sandy Tipton	Pilated Woodpecker	23	HM
B	Tom Hauert	Orion Nebula	24	AW-POM
B	Carl Chandler	Light House	21	HM

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B	Tom Hauert	Orion Nebula	24	AW-POM
B	Carl Chandler	Light House	21	HM

LARGE COLOR PRINTS

Class	Maker	Title	Score	Honor
B	Tom Hauert	Grizzly-Tina	22	HM
B	Tom Hauert	Social White Ibis	24	AW
A	Reinhard Schwind	Beauties of the Rockies	24	HM
A	Steve Seburn	Wild Focus	24	AW
AA	Bob Reynolds	Tropical Paradise	23	HM
AA	Jan Weld	Bugling Elk	25	AW-POM

SMALL MONOCHROME PRINTS

Class	Maker	Title	Score	Honor
AA	Jan Weld	Got It!	22	HM
AA	Jan Weld	Ready to Pounce	24	AW-POM
A	Mark Becker	Serpentine Root	22	HM
A	Mark Becker	Water Power	22	AW
B	Tom Hauert	Daybreak Egret	21	AW
B	Sue Farwick	Dear Dahlia	21	HM

LARGE MONOCHROME PRINTS

Class	Maker	Title	Score	Honor
AA	Jan Weld	Food on the Fly	24	HM
AA	Jan Weld	Glaring Leopard	25	AW
A	MARK Becker	Garrapata Erratic	21	HM
A	MARK Becker	Engine 16	23	AW
B	Tom Hauert	American Eagle	24	AW-POM
B	Tom Hauert	Space Dream	22	HM

DPI COLOR

Score Sheet Class A

Maker	Title	Score	Honor
Jan Weld	Hitch Hiker	BOS	
Carol Wille	Prairie Grass Sunset	24	HM
Vesela Zlateva	Butterfly	23	HM

DPI COLOR

Score Sheet Class B

Maker	Title	Score	Honor
Glenn Kaupert	Snow Sparrow	23	AW
Glenn Kaupert	Chicago Skyline	22	HM
Steve Seburn	Lake Michigan Storm	22	HM

DPI COLOR

Score Sheet Class AA

Maker	Title	Score	Honor
Ken Olsen	Golden Stare	23	AW
Sandra Tipton	Water Lilies	23	HM

DPI MONO

Score Sheet Class A

Maker	Title	Score	Honor
Sandra Tipton	Great Blue Heron	24	BOS
Carol Wille	Heart Petal Rose	24	HM
Sue Farwick	After the Rain	24	HM

DPI MONO

Score Sheet Class B

Maker	Title	Score	Honor
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FEBRUARY HONORED PHOTOS PRINTS

SMALL COLOR PRINTS



Jan Weld Big Foot 24HM



Jan Weld Cooling Tiger 24AW



Steve Seburn Red Bellied Woodpecker24AW



Sandy Tipton Pilated Woodpecker23HM



Tom Hauert Orion Nebula 24AW-



Carl Chandler Light House 21HM

LARGE COLOR PRINTS



Tom Hauert Social White Ibis 24AW



Reinhard Schwind Beauties of the Rockies 24 HM



Steve Seburn Wild Focus 24AW



Jan Weld Bugling Elk 25AW-POM

SMALL MONOCHROME PRINTS



Jan Weld Got It! 22HM



Jan Weld Ready to Pounce 24AW-POM



Tom Hauert Daybreak Egret 21AW



Sue Farwick Dear Dahlia 21HM

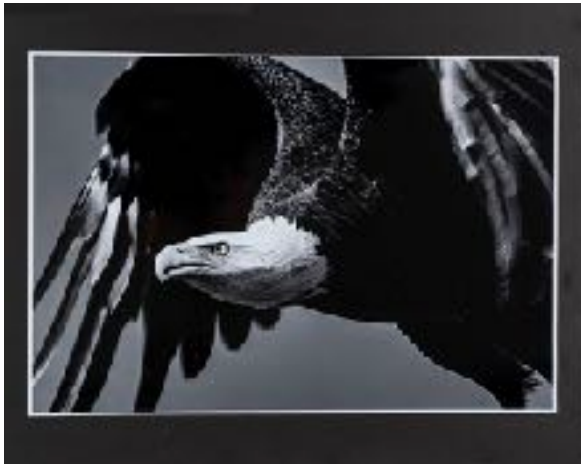
LARGE MONOCHROME PRINTS



Jan Weld Food on the Fly 24HM



Jan Weld Glaring Leopard 25AW



Tom Hauert American Eagle 24AW-POM

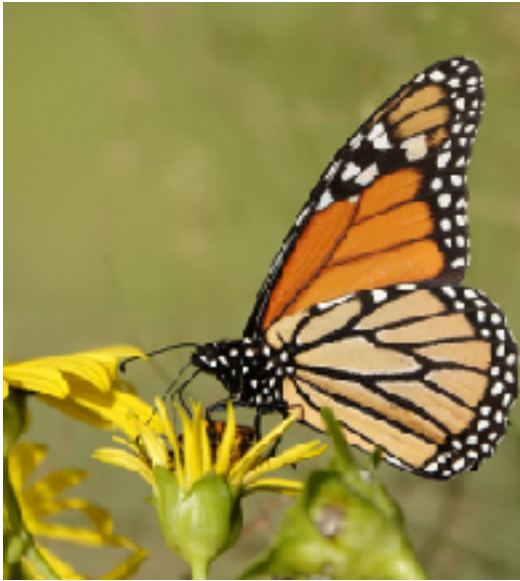
DPI COLOR



Jan Weld Hitch Hiker Score: BOS



Carol Wille Prairie Grass Sunset 24



Vesela Zlateva VV Butterfly 23HM



Glenn Kaupert Snow Sparrow 23AW



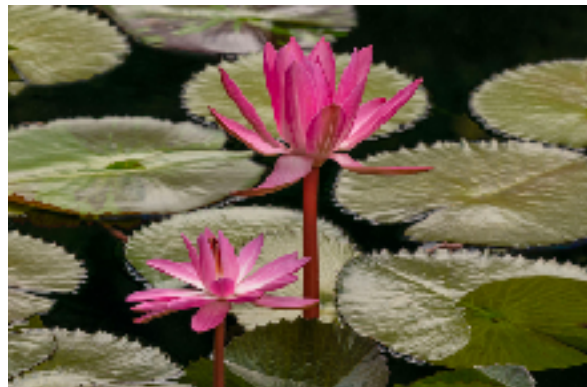
Glenn Kaupert Chicago Skyline 22HM



Steve Seburn Lake Michigan Storm 22HM



Ken Olsen Golden Stare 23AW



Sandra Tipton Water Lilies 23HM

DPI MONOCHROME



Sandra Tipton Great Blue Heron 24BOS



Carol Wille Heart Petal Rose 24HM



Sue Farwick After the Rain 24HM



Alfredo Rodriguez Butterfly
just out of its cocoon 21



Alfredo Rodriguez iris flowers in monochrome 21HM



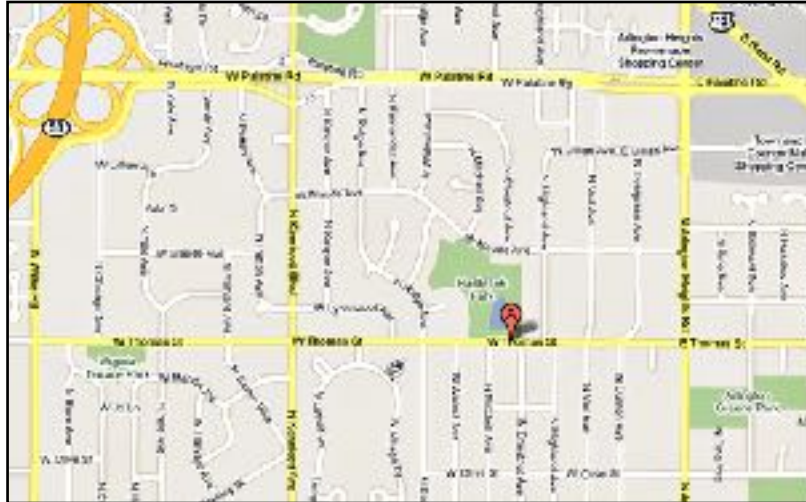
Jan WeldPerching Kingfisher 23

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CatSoos@AOL.com

*ACC meets at the Christian Church of
Arlington Heights, 333 W. Thomas Avenue,
three blocks west of Arlington Heights
Road, across from Hasbrook Park on the
1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at
7:30 p.m.*



*Chicago
Area
Camera
Clubs
Association.*



Looking for something to do Wednesday mornings?

Join Us for Breakfast

9:00AM every Wednesday

Sparkling conversation on all conceivable subjects

And the food isn't bad either

Where?

At the Continental Restaurant

788 S Buffalo Grove Rd, Buffalo Grove, IL

Northwest corner of Buffalo Grove Road and Dundee Road

Come join us...

Larry, Larry, Mike, Bob, Judie and Rich