

Happy New Year!

THE AUSTIN



SHUTTERBUG

Austin Shutterbug Club Newsletter

Austin, Texas January 2012

New Year's Resolutions- Photographically Speaking

Each year at this time we tend to make plans for the coming year and to reflect on the year gone by. We all make resolutions for a new year. I believe in that process with the Austin Shutterbug Club as well.

I want to thank everyone that helped make the 2011 club year an exciting one. Many thanks go to the Officers and Leadership Committee for a job well done.

I believe that we have met many of these challenges head-on and have succeeded to make many of the improvements we outlined, including: Modernizing club activities to bring us further into the 21st century and its electronic age. Improve club communications. Increase opportunities for interaction of all members and their photography. And, last but not least, cause member competitions to become a more fruitful activity for everyone. Last year we agreed to make some changes in the way we did things.

We grew competition into Evaluation and Review, a different format and more productive tool. We added a Member Moment program to exchange and demonstrate new or exemplary things. Kathy McCall produces a dynamic newsletter to bring us all the monthly news. Rose Epps continues to manage electronic communications for us to get information at the speed of light. And, of course, we moved our meeting location to the Northwest Recreation Center.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels. I would like to see us raise the bar once again for 2012. I am going to propose new challenges for Evaluation and Review, complete with a modified scoring system that will spread out the point distribution. We are also expecting to increase field trips and re-introduce workshops for members and host some prestigious member exhibits that are juried to high quality standards. And fill the year with many good things.

Remember, to be a thriving, viable club our number one task must be to attract and retain enthusiastic members. As part of that process I will seek out many of you for your insights and wisdom. When I call upon you, please take it not as a job, but as a positive opportunity. Please accept my challenge, let's go to work, but let's not forget to have fun.

From a personal basis, are you ready for the photographic New Year?

Did you back up all your images? I cannot stress enough the need for backing up your photography and computer files. Plan a solid system. Equipment is pretty inexpensive right now. There a lot of choices on the market. Portable hard drives, Drobos and RAID systems are good considerations.

Do you critically edit your images? Because pixels are free, we must take time to edit the countless photographs and dump the zonkers and keep only the very best. Components of Bridge, Lightroom, ACDSee and Aperture are great tools for this task.

Did you buy a new piece of equipment? While that new lens may not make you a better photographer, it may expand your capability. The key here is to assure protection for your equipment. Add the new gear to your equipment file along with the serial numbers, date purchased and price paid. And keep purchase receipts in a safe place. Don't forget to add the equipment to your insurance policy.

Do you have a shooting plan? Commit to shooting on a regular basis. It's a great form of practice. Unlike a new piece of gear, it's the only thing that will make you a better photographer. Plan and start a long-term photo project. Give yourself some goals, strategies and rewards. Remember that you don't have to go somewhere exotic to take good pictures. Your own life makes great subject matter.

Are you active in our club? The ASC is an excellent outlet for those serious with their photography. Join a field trip. Plan on attending one of our workshops. And, participate in Evaluation and Review. Your photography will take off. Just ask those that do.

Brian Loflin, President

***Time to pay your
annual Dues!***



January 2012 Meeting

January Evaluation and Review will be: "Exceptional Drought"

**Thursday, January 12, 2012 7:00 pm
Northwest Recreation Center
2913 Northland Dr.
Austin, TX 78757**

***Visitors are
always
welcome!***

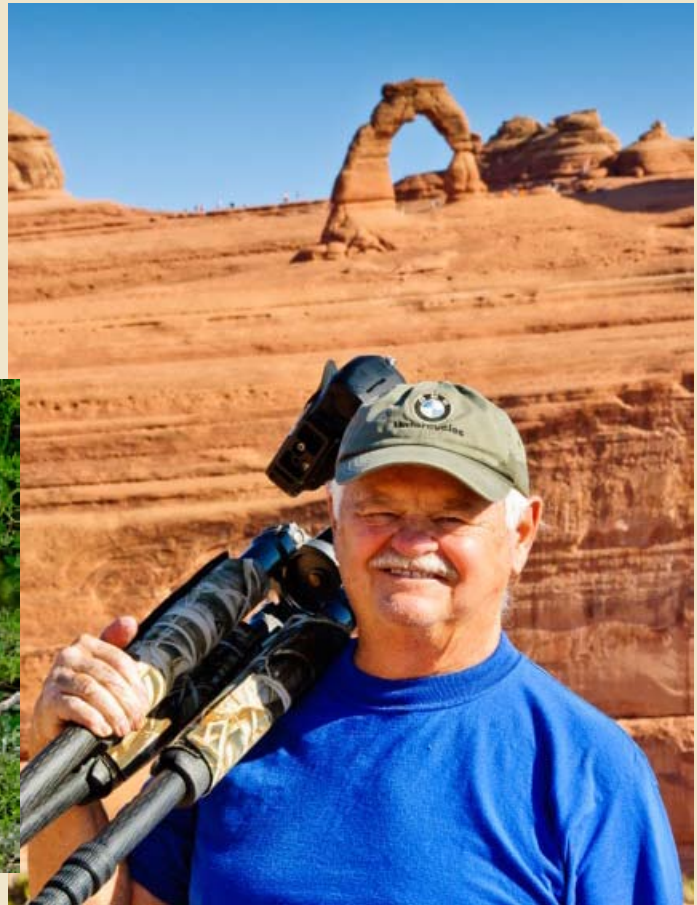


2011 Photograph of the Year
 Pete Holland
 "Dinosaurs"



"Snowy Egret Mating Dance"
 Dolph McCranie

CONGRATULATIONS to All of Our ASC 2011 Winners!



2011 Photographer of the Year
 Dolph McCranie

Over the year, Dolph achieved 8 perfect scores out of the 12 images allowed per member during the annual competition.

Club Leadership for 2012

President	Brian Loflin	331-2820
Vice President/Programs	Pete Holland	689-5939
Secretary	Jane Kelley	261-3572
Treasurer	Paul Munch	836-6379
Competition Chairman	Fred Peebles	441-7913
Competition Co-Chairman	Tom Delaney	266-6490
Competition Committee	Dolph McCranie	394-9031
Events Coordinator	Linda Sheppard	306-1516
Events Coordinator	Marc Perry	289-1276
Hospitality Chairman	Phyllis Rummel	264-1412
Newsletter Editor	Kathy McCall	264-9602
Refreshments Chairman	Charlaine Matthews	418-9405
Refreshments Chairman	Bev McCranie	394-9031
Exhibits	Shirley Loflin	331-2820
Webmaster	Barbara Hunley	250-1144
Electronic Communication	Rose Epps	502-0608
Roster and Name tags	Rose Epps	502-0608

2012 Upcoming Assignments

January – Exceptional Drought

Everyone is aware that we are in the midst of one of the worst droughts in Texas history. Your assignment is to document the effects of that drought within the State of Texas, through an image that conveys the severity of the year it never rained. In case you're wondering, wildfires are one of the effects of drought, which makes them acceptable images for this assignment.

March – Macro in Black & White

Macro images are typically made as color images. But what if they're not? The assignment for March is to document a tiny (or at least very small) subject and render it in black & white tones. Monochrome (a.k.a. cyanotype, sepia, etc.) does not meet the assignment.

2011 Evaluation and Review Winners
Judged by Griff Smith, Photo Editor for Texas Highways

In the **Assignment** category--the **Winners** are:



1st Place
Beverly McCranie
"Sunrise at Mesa Arch"



2nd Place
Babara Hunley
"Gothic Splendor"



3rd Place
Beverly Lyle
"Let's Go Riding"

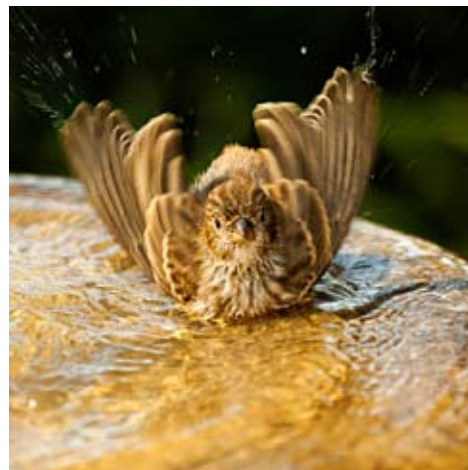
In the **General** category--The **Winners** are:



1st Place
John Baker
"Dahlia Lilies"



2nd Place
Dolph McCranie
"Red Lily"



3rd Place
Phil Charlton
"Does a Massage Come with this Bath?"

7 Tips for Great Bird Photography

Copyright 2011 - Jeff Parker – www.JeffParkerImages.com
May be reprinted with attribution. May not be edited without permission.

GO WHERE THE BIRDS ARE.

If herons act skittish at your local pond, go where they're not so nervous (i.e. fishing docks). Need your spirit to soar with bald eagles? Check out the yearly nest near Burnett, Texas. Roaring to ride the wind like a raptor? Glide to El Paso for northern harriers and golden eagles or take part in Corpus Christi's yearly Hawk Watch. Crave dramatic snow geese and sandhill crane sunrise silhouettes? Set up your tripod at New Mexico's Bosque del Apache. Antsy for the antics of burrowing owls and the sound of the meadowlark? Run for the Rita Blanca Grasslands. Want wonderful whooping cranes? Head toward Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Vociferous green jays and kiskadees? South Texas provides haven for these colorful birds. Melodic golden cheeked warblers? A limited number of Hill Country ranches offer specially-built photo blinds within this species' habitat.



Photo courtesy Brian Loflin

FIND KNOWLEDGABLE HELP.

Along with tip #1, hiring a guide or taking part in a tour gets you in the right place at the right time. For example, South Texas' photo ranches offer exceptional opportunities for gathering high quality images of dramatic scenes like crested caracaras duking it out, but you need a guide to gain access. And, if it's good photographs -- rather than simply good sightings -- of endangered whooping cranes you're after, you'll need to take a tour. In addition, someone who not only knows the local avian species, but is also an expert photographer will understand when and where the animals and the lighting suit your lens best.

DON'T PUT THE BIRD IN THE CENTER OF THE FRAME.

One thing most great bird photographs have in common is that they're interesting. Thus, in the spirit of adding interest, do your best not to place your subject dead center in the frame when composing the shot. Instead, use what pros call the "rule of thirds," a visual trick which breaks the space into, well, you guessed it, thirds. The eye tends to find an object off to one side or the other more pleasing than one sitting smack dab in the middle. (And, just because a bird's breathtaking, don't think you can skip this rule; nope, this one holds true even with stunners like vermilion flycatchers!)

WATCH THAT BACKGROUND!

A messy, jumbled background that distracts from the real object of beauty spoils many otherwise fine photographs. Any background elements need to be far enough away to go out of focus. Also, remember, when you're working at a feeder, that perch can be moved!

BE AWARE OF THE LIGHT ANGLE.

Ask pros about the single most important element in photography and most would say, "The right light!" With that in mind, generally speaking, for birds you want front light (light coming from behind you). Back light works for nice silhouettes and on wading birds with plumes (...ah, the elegance this adds to the already-elegant great egret!). Try to avoid side light as it rarely does our winged friends justice.

SELECT A PHOTO-WORTHY PERCH.

If you're creating your images at a feeding station, you've got the flexibility of providing your own perch, so get creative! Pick something interesting and make it even more so by adding a little something interesting (i.e. berries, flowers, lichen, etc.). But be careful not to add too much or you'll distract from the beauty of the bird. And keep in mind the size of the perch versus the size of the bird. A dainty painted bunting, for example, will look out of place on a big log.

TRY TO CAPTURE A MOMENT.

What pros call "bird on a stick" shots refer to the kinds of photos that, even though they might display birds clearly and follow other tips featured here, tend to be pretty boring overall. Let's face it - we like seeing animals in action! Capturing a behavior (even a small one like a northern cardinal chomping on a berry) makes for a much more interesting image and can still show off the beauty of the bird.

There's certainly more to learn about each of these topics, but put these tips to work and you'll immediately take better photos of the birds within your focal point. And the more often you put these pro-pointers to use the better you'll get. Just remember: prep and prepare beforehand for great bird photographs because a bird in hand is better than...well, you get the picture!

Holiday Banquet and December meeting of the Austin Shutterbug Club

Members of the Austin Shutterbug Club gathered at Tres Amigos for the annual Christmas party and end of year awards celebration on December 8, 2011 with 35 in attendance. Social time started at 6:00 pm and the dinner at 7:00. The official meeting commenced at 8:00 and was led by club president Brian Loflin. His first duty was to announce the first door prize winner Marcie Holland.

Brian then discussed successes of 2011 and announced some challenges and New Year's resolutions for our club for the coming year of 2012:

- The improvement in education and productivity of our members
- The scoring system will be more critical with scoring on a 27 point system instead of 15.
- More field trips and workshops
- Host to more photography exhibits
- Attract more members, especially those with talent and/or access to new ideas or venues for field trips

Brian then thanked individual leaders for their excellent service throughout the 2011 year saying, "it's been a great group effort with many notable accomplishments".

New officers for the 2012 year were introduced and officially installed to start serving Jan. 1st. They are:

OFFICERS

- President: Brian Loflin
- Vice President and Programs: Pete Holland
- Secretary: Jane Kelley
- Treasurer: Paul Munch

COMMITTEES

- Competition: Fred Peebles (Chair), Tom Delaney, Dolph McCranie
- Events Coordinators: Linda Sheppard, Marc Perry
- Hospitality: Phyllis Rummel
- Newsletter: Kathy McCall
- Refreshments: Charlene Matthews & Bev McCranie
- Exhibits: Shirley Loflin
- Webmaster: Barbara Hunley
- Communications, Roster and Name Tags: Rose Epps

Advisory Members of the Executive Committee

- Past President: Lucy Durfee
- At Large: Phil Charlton

Brian announced the next door prize winner as John Davis and then a guest's name was drawn.

The floor was then turned over to the club's competition committee chairman, Fred Peebles, to present the competition winners

for the year. He stated that the official judge was Griff Smith, photo editor for Texas Highways Magazine. Fred then explained the point system that the club uses. Based on the number of entries and overall scores, images that scored 15 points became eligible for year-end judging. He also stated that this year produced more perfect scores than any other year. There were 74 perfect score images submitted to the judge.

Fred then announced the winners for the year:

Assignment Competition category:

3rd place winner was Beverly Lyle for "Let's go riding"

2nd place winner was Barbara Hunley for "Gothic Splendor"

1st place winner was Beverly McCranie for "Sunrise at Mesa Arch"

General Competition category:

3rd place winner was Phil Charlton for "Does a massage come with this bath?"

2nd place winner was Dolph McCranie for "Red Lily"

1st place winner was John Baker for "Dahlia Lilies"

The Image of the Year winner was Pete Holland for "Dinosaurs"

The Photographer of the Year was Dolph McCranie.

Over the year, Dolph achieved 8 perfect scores out of the 12 images allowed per member during the annual competition.

His image, "Great Egret on a Cloudy Day" was shown as an example of Dolph's stunning work.

Brian congratulated all the winners and thanked Fred Peebles for all of his hard work in competition this year.

He then continued drawing tickets for gift certificate door prizes:

Charlene Matthews - \$50 Linda Shepherd - \$15

Lois Schubert - \$15 Basset Maguire - \$15

Sharon Munch - \$15 Laura Singleton - \$50

Charlene Matthews announced that the funds for gift prizes came from the money collected in the "kitty" at the club meeting refreshment time.

Brian stated that the first leadership meeting will be in January at a time to be announced later. He also said that all of the year-end competition images of 2011 will be shown at the regular meeting in January.

Brian then thanked everyone for their participation and thanked Pete Holland for all the programs for the year and awards. He closed the evening's festivities by wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Minutes by Shirley Loflin

Call for Entries and Photography Events

Imagination

A Smith Gallery, Johnson City

Deadline: January 9, 2012

Cash prizes of \$250 each will be awarded for The Juror's Award and The Director's Award, along with a \$100 prize for the Visitors' Choice Award. There will also be five Honorable Mentions. Aline Smithson, writer and editor of the blogzine Lenscratch, will be the juror for "Imagination".

asmithgallery.com/Imagination_Call_for_Ent.php

Jeff Parker, a Coach for one of the Pro-Am Tournaments sponsored by Images for Conservation, will hold his Pro-Am May 17-21 on the historic 3,200 acre Tacubaya Ranch near the Rio Grande Valley -- just in time for spring migration! Learn more by visiting his website: www.JeffParkerImages.com.

For more "Call for Entries" see
www.texasphoto.org/NatNewsCompetitions.html,
The website of the Texas Photographic Society