



# THE IMAGE

January 2024  
Winter Issue

## View From the Boardroom

*By Cynthia Thibault*

I always wanted my own studio. The real estate options from House Hunters always impressed me the most when they included one. One day, I decided that I didn't need a new house to get a studio, but could create one in my finished basement. The difference between an art studio and a photography studio is the light. Painters want it, photographers have to work around it. I bought the “complete” kit (there is always more with photography) including green screen, stand for green screen, bulbs, clips, umbrellas etc. for less than \$200 (much cheaper than a new house) from Amazon.

I was fairly happy, for a while. I learned about focal distances, reflections, shadows, and moving camera and lights around. The most exciting addition to my abilities was buying Capture One software so I could see the image on my computer screen before I took the shot. 1000 images later, I realized that no matter how many coin pictures I took, I was most likely never going to be happy with the results (although Photoshop could help, but I didn't want to spend any more time on it) so I happily changed projects.

This time, I wanted the light because I was growing a tomato from seed. I set up the studio in my bedroom and discovered that this setup was the ultimate joy. I could get up in the morning and snap the photo in my pajamas. No self discipline required. The photos were lit by my bedroom window. As the plant grew, I changed the angle and image size, so only the dirt would show, with no “edge of pot” distractions. I learned about focus stacking so the little sprout was tack sharp from the dirt to the end of every leaf. Then came the obstacle I didn't wish to overcome. I wanted to plant the tomato outside and didn't really have a solution to creating a wonderful growth shot with an interesting background (although when I get back to this project I will probably work with blurring the background, as we have touched upon at our club meetings) so I happily changed projects.

My current project will require some lighting from the kit, blended with some natural light, as I want the characters to look natural as I Photoshop them into real surroundings. My experiences with the basement lighting and the bedroom lighting inform my activities. I have just begun the experiments, but this time there will be no changing of projects. In my view you can feel free to set up your studio wherever is convenient, as long as the daylight, white light or yellow light work for your photo. The lighting kit is very portable and can easily be tucked away if necessary.

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*“What makes photography a strange invention is that its primary raw materials are time and light.”... John Berger*

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## 2023-2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

- February 7, 2024—Bert Sirkin Program: How AI is Changing Photography
- February 21, 2024— Critique meeting (send digital images by 2/15)
- March 6, 2024—HiJinx Hands-on Workshop
- March 20, 2024—Print Critique
- April 3, 2024—NECCC 30 Slide Review
- April 17, 2024—Club Competition
- May 1, 2024—Spring Show Opening
- May 15, 2024—Review of Annual Club Project
- June 5, 2024— Annual Business meeting and Pot Luck Social

## 2023-2024 DEADLINES

- February 15, 2024— Digital Images sent for Critique Meeting
- April 11, 2024—Send images for Club Competition
- April 29, 2024—Hang date for Senior Center Spring Show
- May 9, 2024—Send images for Annual Club Project (4 Seasons)

## ANNUAL PROJECT FOR 2023-2024

For the 2023-2024 season, the theme for the annual club project will be “Four Seasons”. Make 4 or 5 images in each season. They should clearly depict the season that they represent. The subject is up to you. You can pick a specific subject and photograph this same subject each season or it can be different subjects that represent the season. Have fun with this and we will review the photos next May. If you don’t want to do this project, you may do a personal project instead. See the sidebar on the right for details.

## ACTIVITIES

The Association of International Photography Art Dealers has a photography show scheduled for April 25-28 in NYC. A day trip is being considered. If you are interested in seeing the show with other club members please contact a board member. More information can be found at <https://www.aipad.com/show>.

## OPEN BOARD POSITION

The board is looking for a club member who can take over the position of Digital Image Technology. This position involves collecting, organizing and submitting (when appropriate) images that have been sent by club members for digital critiques and competitions, the NECCC 30 slide review, and any programs where our members have submitted photos to be viewed at a meeting such as images for the annual club project. It also includes showing these digital images at our meetings and running the NECCC 30 slide review commentary at our meeting. Skills that include computer file management and slide show creation and presentation are needed. If you have some of these skills and are willing to take on this role, please contact Maryann or anyone on the board.

### NEW ANNUAL PROJECT FOR 2023-2024

This year we will continue two annual project choices. The “Members Choice” project is offered to members as an alternative to the annual project theme chosen by the club membership. Members can pick an area to practice or explore throughout the year. This can be done on your own or with another member working as a team. A scheduled club meeting will be allocated to presentations of personal projects.

The second annual project choice is titled “Four Seasons.” Take several photos in each of the four seasons. They should clearly depict the season. You can choose a specific subject and photograph it in each season or it can be different subjects that represent the seasons in some way. Have fun and we will review the photos next May.

### FLICKR

Our club has a Flickr web site. Whenever you have an image that you’d would like to share with the club, consider adding it to the Flickr site. If you are not familiar with our Flickr site, here is the link. <https://www.flickr.com/groups/coastalcameraclub/>

We look forward to seeing your images.

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for the upcoming season will be collected at the first meeting on Wednesday, September 21. Dues for individual members are \$30 for the 2023-2024 season. A family membership will be \$45 and student membership (age 18 or younger) is \$5. It is important for us to collect dues early in the season so that we can pay for speakers and other upcoming activities. If you cannot attend our first meeting, you can send a check to our treasurer, Anne Mele.

## RESOURCES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**Connecticut College Arboretum.** The Arboretum is open to visitors this winter and provides ample photography opportunities. Go to <https://www.conncoll.edu/the-arboretum/> for more information.

**Classes and Meetups: Milford Photo.** Many classes and meetups scheduled throughout the winter offered at Milford Photo. For more information go to <https://www.milfordphoto.com/>

**Workshops and Events, Hunts Photo.** Many in-person and online classes and events scheduled throughout the winter offered at Hunts Photo. For more information go to <https://edu.huntsphoto.com>

**AIPAD Spring Show, April 25-28, NYC.** The Association of International Photography Art Dealers is having it's spring show. For more information go to <https://www.aipad.com/show>

## TIDBIT #112—PART 2: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

*By Archie Stone*

In the fall newsletter, Archie wrote an extensive article discussing artificial intelligence in photography. The entire article was too large for the newsletter so I am including the second part of Archie's article where he provided a statement on Artificial Intelligence relating to image creation and ownership. If you want to revisit Part 1, check the fall newsletter.

### Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Image Creation and Ownership

In all sections of the exhibition, images must originate as photographs made by the entrant. They may not incorporate identifiable images produced by anyone else (for example: clip art, replacement skies, or stock images). Images created in whole or in part by image creation software (frequently called 'AI' images) are not allowed. Editing or alteration of images is permitted within the limits specified in the relevant section definitions that are available here <https://psa-photo.org/page/division-definition>

A Note on Artificial Intelligence ("AI") images: NECCC follows the PSA Guidelines in that PSA does not allow images to be submitted that contain any elements not created/shot by the submitting photographer. This includes layers, textures, additional elements, AI generated images or components, etc. <http://neccc14.neccc.org/Interclub/Projected-Image-Interclub-Competition-Rules-and-Regulations.pdf>

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of a computer or a robot controlled by a computer to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and discernment. [www.britanica.com/technology/computers](http://www.britanica.com/technology/computers)

Artificial intelligence is the intelligence of machines or software, as opposed to the intelligence of humans or animals. It is also the field of study in computer science that develops and studies intelligent machines. "AI" may also refer to the machines themselves. Advanced web searches (Google, Yahoo, MSN, etc.), Siri, and Alexa, along with recommendation systems such as U tube, are all examples of AI. [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence)

Photography uses artificial intelligence in ways you may not be aware of. Advanced autofocus systems in modern cameras depend on AI. Photo editing tools employ AI to remove noise and enhance the detail and sharpness of images. Specialized websites apply text prompts to create AI-generated photos. [www.expertphotography.com](http://www.expertphotography.com)

One of the most common fears photographers have about AI in photography is the idea that it will replace or diminish their creativity. Don't forget, AI is only a tool, not a replacement for the artistic eye and vision of a professional photographer. [www.fstoppers.com](http://www.fstoppers.com)

**AI image generators** utilize trained [artificial neural networks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_neural_network) to create images from scratch. These generators have the capacity to create original, realistic visuals based on textual input provided in natural language. What makes them particularly remarkable is their ability to fuse styles, concepts, and attributes to fabricate artistic and contextually relevant imagery. This is made possible through [Generative AI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generative_AI), a subset of artificial intelligence focused on content creation. AI image generators are trained on an extensive amount of data, which comprises large datasets of images. Through the training process, the algorithms learn different aspects and characteristics of the images within the datasets. As a result, they become capable of generating new images that bear similarities in style and content to those found in the training data. <https://www.altexsoft.com/blog/ai-image-generation/>  
Big data is the driving fuel of all these intelligent performances. Without data, AI cannot do anything but stand as a technology framework. [www.westagilelabs.com](http://www.westagilelabs.com)

## WHAT QUALIFIES IN THE NATURE CATEGORY

*By Susan Frechette*

This season the CCC is participating in the NECCC Digital Interclub competitions. There are three competitions being hosted, Fall, Winter and Spring, and in choosing member's images to send to each competition, discussions have come up regarding what images qualify for the 'Nature' category and what are the considerations for selecting strong images in this category.

Our club website defines the Nature category as '**Nature (no hand of man): Photographs must not include any man-made objects, cultivated flora or show signs of human presence.**' However, the NECCC uses the PSA (Photographic Society of America) official definition for judging images in the Nature category and these rules are more definitive. We should assume that any judged show or competition that our club sponsors or participates in will have judges that adhere to the PSA definition.

The official PSA definition for the Nature category is the following:

### **"Nature Definition:**

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both animate and inanimate, that have not been made or modified by humans. Nature images must convey the truth of the scene that was photographed. A well-informed person should be able to identify the subject of the image and be satisfied that it has been

presented honestly and that no unethical practices have been used to control the subject or capture the image. Images that directly or indirectly show any human activity that threatens the life or welfare of a living organism are not allowed. The most important part of a Nature image is the nature story it tells.

High technical standards are expected, and the image must look natural. Adding a vignette or blurring the background during processing is not allowed."

The definition continues and gets more explicit with the following:

"Objects created by humans, and evidence of human activity, are allowed in Nature images

only when they are a necessary part of the Nature story. Photographs of human-created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domesticated animals, human-created hybrid animals and mounted or preserved zoological specimens are not allowed.

Images taken with subjects under controlled conditions, such as zoos, are allowed. Controlling live subjects by chilling, anesthetic or any other method of restricting natural movement for the purpose of a photograph is not allowed.

No modification that changes the truth of a Nature image is allowed. Images may be cropped but no other technique that removes, adds or moves any part of the image is allowed. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise and lens flare are allowed.

Complete conversion of color images to greyscale monochrome is allowed. Partial conversion, toning and infrared captures or conversions are not allowed. Images of the same subject that are combined in camera, or with software, by focus stacking or exposure blending are allowed. Multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively and combined in camera or with software (image stitching) are allowed."

Maryann sent an official and explicit 23 page 'PSA Guide for Nature Photographers and Judges' to our membership on December 12. If you didn't receive it or cannot find it and would like another copy, please email myself or Maryann. The guide goes into great detail on the criteria for judging Nature images and includes many images that illustrate points in their definition.

Members can view the PSA definitions for all photography categories at this site:  
<https://psa-photo.org/page/division-definitions>

## REQUESTS

**Products:** If you have made a photography related purchase in the past year or two, please consider submitting a brief review of the product. This includes gear and software. Some things you might want to include: why did you purchase this product, does it replace something you already own, is it user friendly? Send the review to Sue Frechette at [wfrprs@att.net](mailto:wfrprs@att.net) and she'll publish it in the newsletter.

**Photo Workshops and Tours:** Have you recently participated in a photography workshop or tour? Please consider writing a brief review of your experience. Please comment on the leader/instructor, the location, the photo opportunities, the learning experience in general would you recommend it to others, and anything else you'd like our members to know. Send it to Sue Frechette at [wfrprs@att.net](mailto:wfrprs@att.net). She'll publish it in the newsletter.



## CONNECTICUT HOSPICE WINTER SHOW

This year the Connecticut Hospice is again hosting our winter show titled 'An Exhibit of Member's Work'. Nine members are exhibiting their work on various themes of their choice. The show runs from January 7 through March 15. Here are some of the images currently on display.



This image titled "Ready Aim Fire" was taken by Dave Rathbun. Dave's theme was 'People' and featured images taken over the years at Sturbridge Village during their annual Revolutionary War reenactment.





This photo is titled 'Fern' is one of four photos exhibited by Janet Rathbun. Her theme is 'Nature'.



Allison Maltese's theme is 'The Beauty of Trees' and includes this image titled 'Trees in the Fog'.





'Isn't My Dad Handsome? Male Red Fox and Pup' was taken by Frank Bartlet. His images fit the theme 'Madison Wildlife.'



This image of a Barred Owl is one of several images exhibited by Sue Frechette as part of her 'Owls' theme.





Dianne Roberts is exhibiting photos that she took on a trip to Machu Picchu in 2015.



Mark Janke's images fit a 'Bird' theme. This one is titled 'White-Bellied Sea Eagle'.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I consider trying to inspire you as part of my job description. Funny thing is, I often have to inspire myself! This can be especially true in “stick season” AKA Winter. It’s cold and it’s colorless. Antidotes to winter slump: travel to a better place, brave the cold and find something interesting to photograph—winter resident birds, ice formations/waterfalls, sunrise/sunset and snowscapes when it snows, indoor set ups, your family, your pets all come to mind. Or take this ‘down time’ to learn (or learn more) editing skills. What will I do? I won’t be traveling and I don’t like the cold. My aquarium is not particularly interesting to photograph and there’s no bribe in the world to get my husband to pose. I’ve photographed a few birds out my window (hohum). I’m reviewing Hazel Meredith’s presentation, taking notes and trying a few things with my own photos. I just got a Wacom tablet that I have to learn how to use. And maybe I’ll try some set ups to see what we might do for the hands on photography night we have scheduled for March 6th. It’s important not to neglect your camera for too long. It will feel unloved.

Maryann



Submitted by Paula Chabot