

Sharing the Awareness of Nature through Photography

# SANP Newsletter

August 2021

Flying on a sunbeam, HM, Panoramas category, 2021 Salon, copyright Braam Oberholster.

## August Monthly Meeting—Tues, Aug 31: a hybrid meeting, 7pm at the Watershed Bldg., Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church and virtually via ZOOM, featuring Roger Trentham

Join us on Aug 31 for our first hybrid club meeting. Come to the Watershed Building if you are comfortable meeting in person or join us on Zoom to see Roger Trentham, who will be presenting a program he calls “Here & There, photographic locations near and far.” Here is Roger’s description of his program:

*In this uncertain world of travel for nature photography subjects, join me as I share landscape and wildlife locations from close to home to the far reaches of the U.S. and into the Rocky Mountains of Canada. This program may be used as a planning guide or simply to explore wondrous places that you have visited before.*



Lake Superior ice cave, copyright Roger Trentham.

See Roger’s bio on p. 2. Reading Kristina Plaas’s article on p. 3 titled “To Meet in Person or Not” may help you determine whether attending in person or participating via Zoom is the right approach for you.

As during the last year, SANP club members do not need to register to join the Zoom session. The link will be emailed to all members on Sunday, July 25. Guests who are not SANP club members and wish to join the Zoom session must [register](#) to receive the Zoom link via email. On Aug 31, visiting time starts at 6:45 and the meeting at 7, both in person and via Zoom.

## BIO: Roger Trentham, August presenter

Roger Trentham, an eighth-generation native of the Smoky Mountains, expresses his love of the mountains and their inhabitants through photography, exploring and hiking. He has spent his life exploring and photographing nature in all its glory. Growing up hunting, fishing and exploring in the forests of East Tennessee has given him unique insights into the many moods and seasons of the Smokies.

Roger is a partner in the Smoky Mountain School of Photography ([www.smokymountainsop.com](http://www.smokymountainsop.com)), and he has lead many group and individual nature photography workshops.

Join us on August 31 for what promises to be a most interesting program!



Roger Trentham, our August presenter.



Jasper Elk, copyright Roger Trentham.



The Wave, Northern Arizona, copyright Roger Trentham.

### SANP BOARD UPDATES

The Board recently received this message from Kent Sauter: "Please accept my resignation from the Board of Directors of SANP. Hopefully, the Board can find someone to serve in my position that has more time than I to devote to the effort. I look forward to seeing all of you in-person when the meetings resume." **Thanks, Kent, for your service on the SANP Board since August 2020!**

The Board will be voting at the September meeting to elect Dale Potter, who has agreed to serve in Kent's position until the end of this year, at which time members will elect a replacement for the rest of Kent's term (2020-2022).

If you have a question or issue to bring before the Board, contact [Ed Stickle](#), President, 48 hours before the meeting. An issue may be presented in person (via Zoom for now) if you wish, as long as the president knows that's your preference. If you want to attend a Zoom Board of Directors meeting (even if you have no issues to bring forward), email [Sharon](#) to get the Zoom link. Read minutes from [July](#) and other past [meetings](#).

**Next meeting: Sept 13.**

**To Meet in Person or Not? That is the Question!** — *Kristina Plaas for the SANP Board of Directors*

It's been a long time since the monthly meetings of SANP have been held in person. The effects of COVID-19 continue to have a significant impact on East Tennessee, making the decision to return to in-person meetings difficult. The SANP Board of Directors deeply appreciates those 85 members who took a few moments to complete the recent poll and offer valuable insight on what they need and want at this time. Every comment was read, valued, and discussed by the Board at this month's meeting.

It comes as no surprise that member preferences were varied, with significant numbers expressing either no reservation about a return to meeting in person or qualifying that opinion with a desire for attendees to be vaccinated or masked. Other respondents expressed strong feelings about not meeting in person just yet. Like the membership, the Board of Directors was also divided on the topic of meeting in person and struggled to come up with a plan that meets the needs of the organization as a whole. This is a challenging time, especially since the incidence and severity of COVID-19 in our area has increased since the poll was issued. Likewise, CDC recommendations have also changed, reflecting a heightened concern about the spread of the Delta variant, even among those vaccinated.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the Board has proposed that a compromise plan be implemented beginning with the August meeting and reevaluated at each subsequent Board meeting until COVID-19 is no longer a concern. The plan is as follows:

SANP will meet in person in our usual space in the Watershed Building at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, August 31, at 7 pm. Our meeting room is large with ample space for seating to be socially distanced. Those choosing to attend in person are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering in compliance with CDC recommendations and as a courtesy to other members of the club.

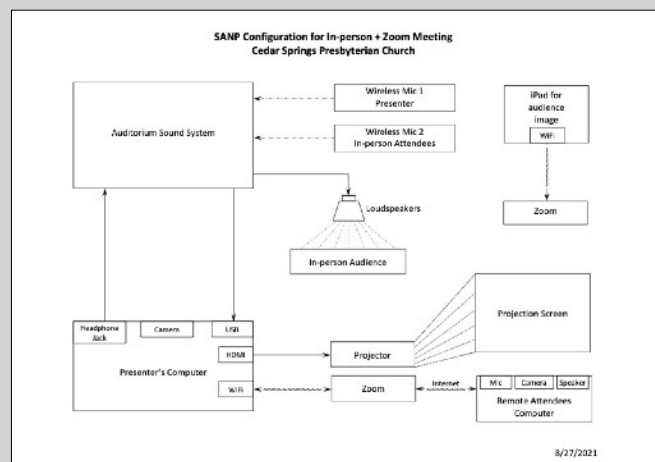
If you plan to attend in person and wish to be socially distanced from your neighbors, please sit in the section of the auditorium closest to the entrance, beginning in the front. Sheets of paper may be placed in surrounding seats to provide the distance you prefer. In addition, sanitary wipes will be placed on the stage in front of this section for your use in sanitizing the chairs if desired. At the end of the meeting, people sitting in this section can leave first.

The August meeting will also be streamed live via Zoom for those members who prefer to participate remotely. Those choosing this option will be able to hear the presenter and see the visuals but will be muted while the presenter is speaking. During the question and answer periods, remote attendees will be able to speak with the presenter and be heard by the in-person attendees as well. The chat feature will also be available for questions and comments for the presenter. A moderator will assist in getting the chat questions from remote viewers to the presenter. The Zoom link will be emailed on Sunday, August 29, to all club members and to any visitors who register.

We ask your patience as members of the Board work through the challenges of hosting a meeting in-person and remotely at the same time. There are sure to be some issues that come up. We also ask members to be thoughtful in deciding to attend in-person. If there is a possibility you may have been exposed to a COVID-positive person, we respectfully ask that you join the remote audience for this meeting.

***By attending the SANP meeting in person, each member and guest voluntarily assumes all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 and agrees to release SANP from any liability related to such exposure regardless of any action or inaction by SANP, the Board of Directors, another member or guest, and the employees, volunteers, and members of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church.***

Thank you for your support and for helping keep each other safe and healthy. We look forward to seeing many of you at our next meeting, either remotely or in person!



SANP Configuration for Hybrid In-Person (at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church)/Zoom Meetings (click image for large PDF).

## SANP Field Events

Check the [events page](#) on our website regularly for all the latest information on events. Contact [Dale Potter](#), 865.773.8114, if you are interesting in leading a field event.

### what's ahead...

**[Cades Cove Early Morning Visit](#)** — **Sat, Aug 28.** Cades Cove will be closed to all traffic for most of September, so this is a good chance for summer photographs. We will focus on cabins, churches, buildings, graveyards, and the mill. We should also have several options for landscapes and possibly fog; bears and wildlife are also possibilities. *Dale Potter, leader*

### what's happened so far in late July/ Aug...

**UT Gardens, July 24** (led by Dale Potter) — Thirteen SANP members enjoyed a trip to the UT gardens. Arriving shortly after sunrise allowed us to shoot in the soft light of early morning. The many species of flowering plants kept us busy the first hour or so, then the warming sun brought out the dragonflies along the foot bridge over the wetland area. Tiny tree frogs also delighted us with their presence on the water plants in the pond. Finally, our outing was punctuated by the opening of the water lily blossoms near the entry gate in response to the hot sun. The UT gardens never fail to provide abundant subjects for nature photography. —*Brad Cottrell*

**Focus Stacking Workshop, July 28** — led by Ron McConathy. Six people enjoyed this 4-hour workshop at the McConathy property in Kingston on Wed, July 28. Once the weather cools, Ron plans to offer it again; there are currently 14 people on the waiting list. If you are interested and haven't signed up, send Ron an [email](#). Read about the [event](#).

**Gupton Wetlands, July 31**— The workshop at Gupton Wetlands on 31 July was very well attended. Thanks to Clay Thurston for sharing his expertise on dragonfly photography. Dale Potter is doing a fantastic job organizing activities for SANP. —*Lee Smalley*

**Heritage Center Greenway Powerhouse Trail, Aug 14**— This area near Oak Ridge was shared with us by Tony Hayzen (see one of his photos on p. 8 from a Fork of the River field event on July 17). It's a great location for a solo trip. Read the details about it from our [event discription](#), including GPS coordinates.



*Hibiscus blossom from UT Gardens field event.  
Copyright Brad Cottrell.*



*The dragon Julie was shooting.  
Copyright Julie Glibbery.*



*Julie Glibbery at the Focus Stacking Workshop. Copyright Ron McConathy.*



*Dragonfly Copyright Lee Smalley.*

## SANP Field Events Update

—**Dale Potter**, 865.773.8114, [dalepotter55@gmail.com](mailto:dalepotter55@gmail.com).

As summer draws to a close and we look back over the last several months, we have had some outstanding field events! Even though a few had to be cancelled due to weather issues, many more happened as planned. Thanks to all the event leaders and to all of you who participated.

As we approach fall, we hope to offer more field events so that members can enjoy the fall colors and cooler temperatures. If you have a place that you would like to visit for photography either this fall or winter, send me the information and I will try to accommodate your suggestion.

### Reliving our experiences

Ron McConathy's focus stacking workshop should resume when the weather cools a bit. This is a must-attend event for those of you who want to learn about and practice focus stacking. I attended his first workshop, and it is one of the best events we have had from the standpoint of learning what to do with your camera.

Photographing dragonflies was a new experience for me and some of our other members this summer, and that event was a fun and enjoyable experience. As a result of looking for places to photograph dragonflies, some of us discovered the Gupton Wetland Area trail near Kingston. The trail in this area is one that everyone should check out during the year because different subjects will be able to photograph at different times. Clay Thurston regularly visits this area. We know it has to be a great area if Clay is visiting often! If you have never been, contact Clay to find out what you could see during the different seasons.

Another new area for some of us was one that Tony Hayzen recently shared with us. The Heritage Powerhouse Trail in Oak Ridge offers various photography options during the different seasons -- from large water lilies and birds in the summer to ducks and other birds in the fall and winter and various plants in the spring. Beavers can be seen in the ponds along with frogs and turtles. It is also a great place for dragonflies and damselflies.

### Exploring on your own

If you are unable to attend field events, two areas are worth considering for solo visits -- the Gupton Wetland Area and the Heritage Powerhouse Trail. They are wonderful treasures without having to deal with large crowds or traffic.

### Looking forward

As we enter September, expect to see several field events that offer a variety of opportunities. As we move into fall and winter, some field events may be posted with short notice because weather could be a factor. Check the website regularly for new events, especially if we get a chance to play in the snow later in the season.



*Dragonfly, Heritage Powerhouse Trail. Copyright Dale Potter.*

## There's still Fujichrome in the freezer, but digital warms his heart today... SANP Board Member Ron McConathy

by David Boruff

Ron McConathy has had a front-row seat to more than six decades of advancements in photography. Today, he enthusiastically embraces the latest developments in technology to share his combined passions for the environment, photography, and teaching.

### From Brownie to R5

Ron grew up in Alton, Illinois, a small town on the banks of the Mississippi about 18 miles north of St. Louis, Missouri. Like many longtime members of SANP, he was introduced to photography at an early age.

"Photography began for me in the late 1950s," he says. "My folks gave me a Brownie Hawkeye, mostly to keep me from using my dad's 35-mm Ansco but also because they recognized my attraction to photography."

It wasn't long before Ron decided to upgrade. "I went to a camera store in Alton and bought a Canon SLR with one lens, and I've been using Canon equipment ever since." His cameras now include a Canon R5, a Canon M6, and a Canon G5X Mark III.

He hastens to add that "the camera brand really doesn't matter. What matters is the person behind the camera and what he or she sees."

Ron carried his photographic vision with him to the University of Illinois. He often took breaks while studying in the University library to look at books on photography and art and to study composition. He worked for a short time as a shooter for the University newspaper, and he remembers one photograph vividly.

"They sent me to photograph a baseball game with a twin-lens Rolleiflex," he says. "I didn't get any usable photos of the game, but one of the pictures I made was of the coach, sitting on the bench with a big smile on his face. That photo got used for years, whenever the team was winning."

### A passion for the environment

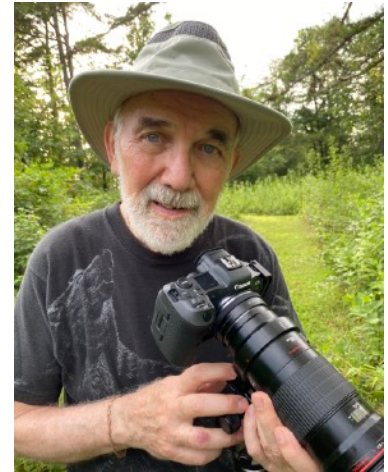
In the classroom at Illinois, and later at the University of Washington and the University of Tennessee, Ron's interests gravitated toward environmental issues. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry.

After a short period working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C., and four years in the Air Force stationed in Florida, a chance visit to a relative in Knoxville led Ron to a 29-year career at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

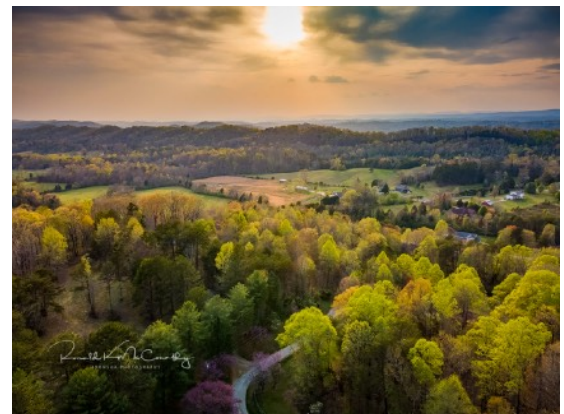
"After the Air Force, I had re-hire rights with the Army Corps of Engineers, and I was planning to move to Washington, D.C.," he says, "but I wanted to travel a little first. On the way home from Florida, I stopped to visit my cousin Bill and see the Smokies."

Bill, a division director at ORNL, told him about an opening in the Environmental Sciences Division. "I went to the interview in jeans and a t-shirt," he says. As it turned out, Ron's attire was what everyone in the division was wearing.

After the interview, Ron continued his travels, heading west with his camping and camera gear. While in California, he learned from his parents that ORNL had offered him the job. "That began my 29-year career at ORNL," he says.



Ron McConathy hard at work in the field near his home.



Drone photo of the area around the McConathy home in Kingston. Copyright Ron McConathy.

## INTERVIEW WITH RON MCCONATHY, SANP BOARD (con't from p.6)

### A 41-year romance begins

Much of Ron's work at ORNL was applied research for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency looking at the effects of air pollution on forests and crops. His continued enthusiasm for the outdoors and his employment at ORNL introduced him to his wife, Sharon, who also worked at ORNL – though that isn't where they first met.

"Sharon and I met in 1978 on the Nantahala River," he says. "I was in a red Old Town canoe, soloing down the river, and I guess she was impressed with my canoeing."

Sharon admits that Ron caught her eye that day. After lunching together at the ORNL cafeteria, they had their first real date: a Lady Vols basketball game. When Ron removed a possum trapped in the chimney and wood stove in Sharon's rental house, their bond was sealed.

After they married in early 1980, photography became a shared hobby and a way of spending more time together, though Sharon remembers the circumstances more frankly: "I knew if I didn't get involved in photography myself, I'd never see him," she says, chuckling.

After Ron retired, they established a photography business that lasted about 15 years. Around that time, Ron rekindled a lifelong affinity for teaching.

### Giving back

While still in the Air Force, Ron began teaching swimming and life-saving for the Red Cross, and he continued that in Oak Ridge. He credits legendary photographer DeWitt Jones with inspiring him to apply his love for teaching to photography.

"We met DeWitt Jones at a class on the Island of Moloka'i in Hawaii." Ron says that during the workshop, DeWitt pulled him aside and complemented his photography. Then he asked, "Now how are you going to give back this gift to others?"

That poignant question led Ron to begin teaching photography and workshops in the University of Tennessee's highly-regarded digital photography certificate program alongside other SANP members like Kendall Chiles.

Sharon recalls dropping in on one of Ron's classes, where she says she was "truly amazed at the connection he made with his students and the attention paid to their process. I was touched by what I saw."

### A deep history with our Club

While Ron has cut back on his teaching in recent years, he continues to lead occasional workshops with Kendall, and he's used the isolation of the COVID pandemic to focus on techniques he's been wanting to try for a while, like focus stacking, infrared and drone photography.

And as a charter member of SANP and former president for five years, he shares historic perspective with current Board members, many of whom are newcomers. Ron says Club activities were low-key in the early days, centering on meetings and field trips. It wasn't until the late 90's that the Salon was established, for which Ron was a driving force as well as a formidable competitor. He hopes to produce a book with more than 200 of his award-winning images drawn from more than 50 years of various camera club competitions and other exhibitions. *(Continued bottom of p. 8)*



One of Ron's best furry friends!  
*Copyright Ron McConathy.*



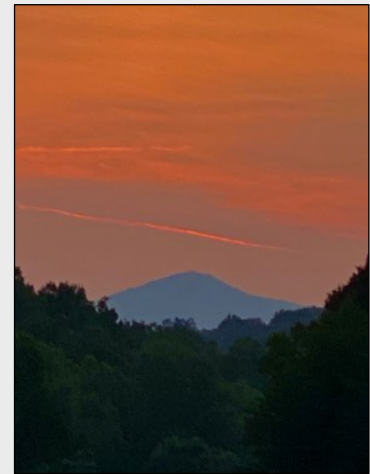
Focus stacked passion flower. *Copyright Ron McConathy.*

Want to share an interesting field experience or other information with fellow members? Email [sanpinfo@sanp.net](mailto:sanpinfo@sanp.net) and include a short description and some photos.



**Tony Hayzen** shared this gorgeous photo (left) taken at one of the SANP field events. Thanks, Tony. What an inspiration!

**Joyce Wilson** hasn't been able to join our Zoom meetings this last year, but here's a great photo (right) of a recent sunset near her home.



## INTERVIEW WITH RON MCCONATHY, SANP BOARD (con't from p.7)

### Excited about the Club's future

"I am pleased to see that the Club has remained active and vibrant despite the challenges of COVID," he says. He has high praise for Kendall's work in hiring nationally renowned speakers; the robust slate of field events organized by Dale Potter; Chris Cannon's efforts to build the Club's social media presence; and the innovative efforts by Brad Cottrell to recruit and retain new members for the Club.

Ron shares the concern expressed by others about the need for younger members. "I'd love to see more young people involved with our club." Ron says. He says that reaching out to local school systems might be a possibility worth exploring.

### Less is more

The McConathy's secluded homestead in Roane County provides the perfect setting for Ron's love of photography, the environment, and teaching. He recently led a COVID-safe focus-stacking workshop at his home, and he regularly posts inspiring photos from his daily strolls on his property.

"One thing I enjoy about photography is hanging the camera on my shoulder and going on a scavenger hunt," he says. "I ask myself, 'What can I find that will make an interesting photograph?' Being able to walk up to a subject and see the potential of a great photograph is something I really enjoy," he says. "I do it almost every day here on our property."

Ron's photographic approach is reductionist. "Painters start with a blank canvas and add what they want included. As photographers, we take everything that is there in nature and eliminate what we don't want in the picture," he says. They add, we subtract."

Ron says that subtracting is a skill worth developing, and one he has refined on many trips with Sharon to his ancestral homeland of Scotland and other places around the globe. Images from their travels to destinations as diverse as Shaker Village and Death Valley can be seen at <https://aronsha.zenfolio.com/>.

### Enriching your view

In Ron's view, life experience is the foundation of photographic vision. "All the photographs viewed, movies watched, music listened to, poetry read, plays attended, artists admired – whatever touches your heart and soul. The more you experience and absorb, the richer your view of the world through a viewfinder."



### Future 2021 Club Meetings

Aug 31 Roger Trentham

Sept 28 TBD

### SANP Officers

President: [Ed Stickle](#), 865-405-8143

Vice President: Open

Secretary: Charles Samuels

Treasurer: Sharon Cottrell

### Volunteer Managers

Community Outreach: [Ron Sentell](#)

Field Events: [Dale Potter](#)

Historian: Open

Membership: [Brad Cottrell](#)

Newsletter: [Sharon McConathy](#)

Programs: [Kendall Chiles](#)

Salon: [Dale Potter](#)

Social Media: [Chris Cannon](#)

Website: [Sharon McConathy](#)

Workshops: Open

### Board of Directors

The Board meets 2nd Monday each month.

2019-2021:	Sharon Cottrell Charlie Samuels Ron McConathy
2020-2022:	David Boruff Kristina Plaas open
2021-2023:	Chris Cannon Gretchen Kaplan Marcy Wielfaert

### CAMERA CLUB COUNCIL OF TENNESSEE (3CT)

SANP is a member club of 3CT, [www.3ct.org](http://www.3ct.org), which is a network of photography clubs from across Tennessee and neighboring states. Their [monthly newsletter](#) (over 20 pages) includes information about meetings and events for member clubs. You can also visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CameraClubCouncilOfTennessee](http://www.facebook.com/CameraClubCouncilOfTennessee).

### Membership Renewal

To renew your membership, go to your online [profile](#) on the SANP website and click the button labeled "Renew to mm/dd/yyyy." Follow the prompts to pay by credit card. If you want to pay by check, click the "Invoice me" button, and follow the instructions on the invoice. Questions? Contact Brad Cottrell at [sanpmembership@gmail.com](mailto:sanpmembership@gmail.com).



Butterfly Puddling, 2021 Salon, Abstract Nature Category. Copyright Chris Robwer.

"Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures."

— Henry Ward Beecher