

SANP MARCH 2007 NEWSLETTER

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 27, 2007

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Time: Social time 6:30pm/Meeting 7:00pm

Location: Goins Auditorium, Pellissippi State Technical Community College

Bill Fortney will be our presenter this month. Bill is a Technical Representative for Nikon USA, and is Nikon's lead Tech Rep to the nature photography industry. Bill is also the founder of Great American Photography Workshops(GAPW). He will be presenting images from his current project, *America From 500 Feet II*, and from other work he has done with responsibilities with Nikon.

His photographic career spans nearly three decades and has covered a wide range of subjects and styles. Bill is the author of three top-selling books: *America From 500 Feet*, *The Nature of America*, and *Bill Fortney's Great Photography Workshop*.

FIELD TRIPS

Brad Cottrell is planning a field trip to Hensley Settlement in Cumberland Gap NHS in April. He will have details and sign-up sheet at the March meeting.

2008 SANP SALON

The SANP Board decided that the "special" category for the 2008 Salon will be "Tennessee State Parks". Get out and visit our many state parks this year, and discover some of the natural wonders Tennessee has to offer!

2007 SANP SALON

A big **THANK YOU** goes out to Janice Threlkeld for a job well done as Chairperson of the 2007 Salon, and to all members who volunteered to help with the many aspects of the Salon.

A big thank you also goes to our 2007 Salon judges: Tom & Pat Cory, Don McGowan, Les

Saucier, Harold Stinnette, and Chuck Summers.

Finally, a big thank you also is due to the following people and companies for providing door prizes for the Salon: Ed Thompson, Jr. of Thompson Photo Products, Bill Prudner of Fuji Photo Film USA, and Gary Farber of Hunt's Photo & Video.

Janice provided the following notes and statistics regarding the 2007 Salon:

On February 24, 2007, about 70 SANP members and their guests gathered to honor the accomplishments of the winners and participants in the 2007 Nature Photography competition. Thirty-two SANP members (Photographer I - 12 members; Photographer II - 20 members) participated in the competition.

This year's competition had four divisions with six categories in each division. Each category was then separated into Photographer I and Photographer II classifications. There were 272 entries with 109 of these awarded certificates. In the 35mm Color Slide Division there were 74 entries. In the Digital Image Division there were 83 entries. In the Black & White Division there were 32 entries. In the Color Print Division there were 83 entries. Congratulations to all who participated!

The annual SANP Nature Photography Competition is a lot of work involving more than just the coordinator. I want to thank the following individuals for saying "yes" to helping with the competition this year. Jim & Mary Kay Bordner, Kendall Chiles, Jeanne Costello, Brad Cottrell, Mark Frankel, Jack Goodwin, Colby McLemore, Mike & Linda Naney, Margarete Ohnesorge, Lee Ownby, Larry Perry, Alice Reed, Robert Thompson, Clay Thurston and Joyce Wilson.

FUTURE MEETINGS & PRESENTERS

April 24, 2007	Willard Clay
May 29, 2007	Ken Jenkins

ARTICLE

The following article is by Ron and Sharon McConathy. They periodically provide articles on nature photography to the *Windstar Wildlife Institute's* weekly newsletter, the *Windstar Wildlife Garden Weekly*, that are available at <http://www.windstar.org>. Many of their previous articles are archived on their website at www.aronsha.com.

What Makes a Photograph an "Original"

by Ron and Sharon McConathy, © 2007

Today photography can be found everywhere — from printed media such as books, catalogs, advertisements and newspapers, to websites, and even to movies, if you think of them as a series of rapidly projected still photographs. We are constantly exposed to other photographer's interpretation of the world around us.

Does all of this sensory input influence us in some way? Undoubtedly it must have some effect, and yet each of us still retains our own view of our environment. This unique way of seeing is what makes our photography "original" and what distinguishes it from that of others.

If you were to give a group of experienced photographers the task of photographing within the confines of a small garden, the resulting images will be surprisingly diverse, even though the environment is the same. What do these photographers have that enables them to produce such diverse and original work? Technical skill, passion, patience, focus, imagination, opportunity, understanding, diligence, and love.

Most of us are familiar with what is needed to be technically skilled. Being able to determine proper exposure, decide what should be in focus, and create an effective composition require study and practice. Becoming technically skilled doesn't happen overnight, and many of us struggle to achieve technical excellence. Today's modern cameras help by offering auto exposure, auto focusing and image stabilization. The creative photographer applies technical ability to consistently produce original images and doesn't rely on camera automation or luck.

Even though most accomplished photographers work hard at their photography, all those who are really well-known show great passion for their work. Patience goes hand in hand with passion, and these photographers are rarely satisfied to stop after just a few images. Through practice, they can quickly recognize a promising subject. And then they examine it from many angles and distances and see how it is affected by different light. These passionate photographers get up early and stay out late, and they wait patiently for the best moment. They photograph each subject many times. They focus intently on the subject, ready to trip the shutter at the exact instant the subject makes eye contact, jumps, stretches, or expresses itself.

Being able to imagine the finished photograph before it has been taken is a great advantage. In addition, imagination can be assisted by advances in equipment. New camera lenses offer different ways of seeing subjects. For example, the first macro lens allowed close-up images of subjects not previously possible. A newly constructed viewing platform at a waterfall provides opportunities that were previously either very dangerous or impossible. Occasionally new locations become accessible to photographers. The first images made of these new places are all "original" in the sense that the area hasn't been seen before. Photographers who visit these places later face more of a challenge to capture the scene in an original way.

Finding new opportunities can also offer a path to originality. Professional photographers are constantly looking for new uses for old equipment or want to be the first to try out a new camera or lens or be the first to photograph a foreign land. These kinds of opportunities for originality sell and attract attention!

Practically speaking, however, most of us are content with familiar equipment, well-known subjects, and locations that are not necessarily unique. For us, being original requires more experimentation, which of course means there will be many throw-aways! The willingness to try new techniques and to study our failures help us understand where we need to improve. Coupled with diligent effort, this path can lead to new discoveries and great successes.

Here are just a few ideas you may want to try:

- Look for an unusual camera angle when photographing a common subject.
- Place your camera under a flower with the sky as a background rather than standing up and shooting down on the subject.
- Wade into the water to photograph the water lily looking back at the shoreline.
- Construct a blind to use for photographing shy creatures.
- Don't be afraid to try something you haven't seen done before.

You don't have to be original to be a good photographer, but after a while ordinary photographs are like eating a bologna sandwich for lunch every day. Boring! Letting your imagination flow and trying new approaches and techniques can have the side benefit of bringing passion back into your photography. And while others may find your new approaches intriguing, you will be the one to ultimately gain the most.

Most of us take photographs for the sheer love of it rather than for any economic benefit. Giving ourselves the freedom and encouragement to stretch beyond our comfort zone, to try new angles and new techniques, to create images that are "original," at least for us, will bring new life and love into our photography. The spark of our original vision will touch others and enable them to see the world in different and wonderful ways.