

The SPPC

Perspective

Club Meetings are 1st and 3rd Fridays @ 7pm at

3854 Crawford Rd, Dryden, MI 48428.

Visitors are always welcome.

Monthly training classes, Studio Fun shoots , and Photo trips to the field are just some of our activities.



Welcome to our Newsletter

The Seven Ponds Photography Club was formed in 2009 to promote the advancement of photography as an art. The purpose of the club is to bring together like-minded people dedicated to advancing their skills through association with other members, the study of others' work, and spirited, friendly competition. The club offers opportunities for members to share knowledge within the club and in the community through exhibitions and programs that encourage interest in the knowledge and practice of all branches of photography.



Top Links:

[Our website, meeting address and schedule, organization, competitions](#)

[Our email for new members and general contact](#)

[Our Facebook Page including photos and events](#)

[New Member Application](#)



Column: YOU AND ME

MY BEST PHOTO EVER

This is a new column that helps us get to know each other through photos about us.

This quarter, we took on the assignment “My Best Photo Ever.” We are all judged by others, for better or worse; this is our chance to review our own portfolios and look for the absolute all-time greatest photo we have ever taken.

Germaine Finley

It is always harder to pick the "best" photograph when it is your own. I carry emotional attachment to many of my images, and that tends to cloud my judgement. I do feel this image Stuttgart Library (Stadtbibliothek Stuttgart) is one of my best.



It also has great memories of me going there with my German cousins. I have long admired the works of M. Escher and have tried to imagine an Escher-like image to take. This image seemed to bring Escher to mind for me and also entertained my eyes as it made me follow the stairs around from floor to floor. I recently won a Judge's Choice Award for Travel Photography from the 2025 PSA Detroit International Exhibition.

Paul Wakabayashi

It is not an easy task to select one “best photo”. Here is a description of it.

Subject: Lion with Lioness

Location: Olare-Motorogi Conservancy (Masai Mara), Kenya

Date: Nov 20, 2024, at 7:03 am

Settings: 600mm, f9.0, 1/1250 sec, 6400 ISO

Our guide found us a pride of lions in the Olare-Motorogi Conservancy, located north of Masai Mara National Park. We found the pride the previous evening as they attempted to hunt a wildebeest, but the light was fading, so we decided to return the next morning.



When we found them again, it seemed they had been unsuccessful and were preparing to find shade and rest. In the photo, a lion joined a lioness and showed affection. We positioned our vehicle ahead of the lions as they walked toward us and passed right by. It was the best lion sighting I have ever had.

John Gill

The General Sherman is the largest known tree by volume, measuring about 33 feet in diameter at the base.



All stages of a sequoia's life, from seedling to monarch, are captured in this one frame, along with the wonder and awe of the people nearby.

Bob Ruby

Picking my favorite photo of all time was very difficult. My favorite is a photo of my three boys in Hawaii before my son Cameron passed from leukemia. From a purely photographic perspective, I think this image of Denali, which I took in 2021, is my favorite.

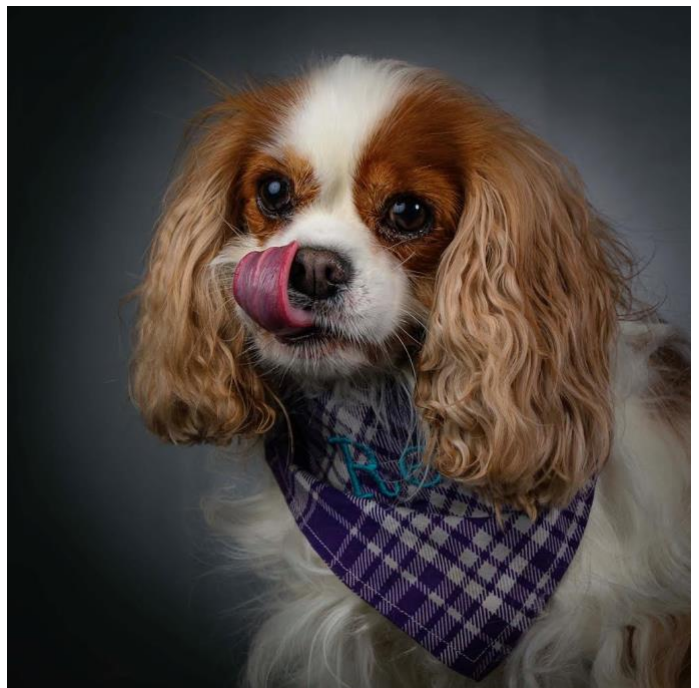


I shot it with my Canon 90D and a rented 100–400 mm lens from the back deck of our Airbnb late in the evening. Mount Denali, also historically called Mount

McKinley, is 20,310 feet tall, so many visitors don't get to see it, let alone take a beautiful photo of the mountain. I converted it to monochrome, which I think works best because it allows you to focus on its beauty, light, and composition. I recently had it printed by Jim and will be entering it in the next competition.

Bobbie Lewis

This is my best photo. To me it shows what 7 Ponds Photo Club is all about...helping each other out.



We came up with an idea, someone needed to share their dog, someone needed to get its attention, and someone was helping assess things while I shot. This image wouldn't have worked without the help of Shannon Hintz, Kristen Grudzien, and Jim Lewis.

Kristin Grudzien

Here is my favorite image.... well, three of them anyway.... The lake is in Wisconsin, and the only edit I made on the image was removing a red buoy. Then there's Vinny at 31 and BrawDug!



John Brown

Taken in 2016 as my vision of cross border history and unity. Post in 2026, capturing that moment of continuous hope and imperfect change. I call it Kisses and Hugs!



Tom Harpootlian

One October I was driving to work and as I turned a corner this magnificent sunrise was on my left so I immediately stopped and shot it!!



Leeann McLaneGoetz

I decided to submit one of my favorite pictures from an SPPC fun shoot. This bobcat was posing in Howell, Michigan, on an extremely cold day in February of 2015.



The bobcat came out, hugged the tree, and looked at me as if I were his long-lost buddy.

Rick Gunthner

My best photo ever is of the bird I love to watch the most: the pelican.



I have stalked the pelican shot for 10 years and was finally rewarded this year. All I did in post was take shadows from under the bird and viola! A gift from the photography Gods to yours truly.

Cindy Bilinsky

My favorite shot is actually a series of shots.

Number 1



We were hiking at Hocking Hills, and I captured my grandson lecturing his mother (my daughter).

Number 2



To this day no one can remember what the discussion was about.

Number 3



But this series says it all!

Number 4





FEATURE STORY

By Germaine Finley

In April 2026, my husband and I traveled to Arches National Park. We had only one week, so we concentrated most of our time on Arches. We did take a couple of side hikes in neighboring areas, but Arches has so much to offer that you can easily spend a week just in that park.

The park lies on top of a salt bed that is responsible for its many arches, spires, balanced rocks, and sandstone fins. There is so much to photograph, with varying light conditions and as an added photographic bonus, Arches National Park is recognized as an International Dark Sky Park.

Moab is the closest city to the park, and we used it as our base for Arches, Canyonlands, and a few hikes outside the park. Note, there are many canyons with great hikes along the Colorado River, as well as a great bike trail.

We started day one by hiking to Delicate Arch.



Delicate Arch - f/8, ISO 100, 42mm, 1/250 sec

My advice to fellow Michiganders and other low-elevation visitors is to wait until you are acclimated before doing this hike. Wait at least

one day before setting out at the altitude you experience at Arches. It is a great hike-though, and looked easy enough on paper: only 3 miles round trip, but it climbs 480 feet up a steep slickrock slope.

Along this steadily uphill trail, you also pass the Wolfe Ranch cabin near the start.



Wolfe Ranch Cabin - f/11, ISO 100, 24mm, 1/250 sec

Parts of the trail are very steep, and near the end there is a narrow section with a drop-off on one side. The wind was gusting up to 35 mph the day we went, but it was absolutely worth it.

My gear for the trip included my Nikon Z7II, Nikon 20 mm f/1.8 lens with Z adapter, Nikon Z 24–200 mm lens, tripod for night photography, headlamp, Cotton Carrier camera holder, hiking sticks, backpack, lots of lens wipes, and lots of water.

There are some very difficult hikes in the Park, but we kept our maximum to around 4 miles round trip. For something easier, there are also wonderful lookouts to photograph stunning views, such as the La Sal Mountain Viewpoint



La Sal Mountains in background – f/13, ISO 100, 200 mm, 1/160 sec

There is a very short hike to Balanced Rock, which is 0.3 miles and paved.



Balanced Rock – f/13, ISO 100, 200mm, 1/160 sec

One night, we took an astrophotography tour. We were not sure about going out at night in the desert by ourselves, so it felt safer to go with a guide for our first time at night in the park. We later realized there are many turnouts and parking lots with great views, so we did not have to hike around if we chose not to. Two main astro tours were offered: one to Delicate Arch and one to the Windows Section. Both looked great, but after doing the Delicate Arch hike during the day, we chose the easier night hiking in the Windows Section.



At night – South Windows - f/1.8, ISO 6400, 20mm, 20 sec

This night photo was not my favorite composition because a class of about 12 students was camped out under the arch and forced the shots I could take.

I was able to get one straight-on shot at the end of the night that may make an appearance at the club. Unfortunately, the Windows area is very popular with both photographers and campers just out stargazing. Our experience is that some photographers are not as polite as others with light usage, but overall, people worked well together and it was an amazing experience.

My takeaway tips for night photography when traveling:

1. Always scout the area during the daytime beforehand so you are familiar with any hazards and can plan your best angle.
2. Use an app like PhotoPills or The Photographer's Ephemeris to plan what you will see. AllTrails is helpful as well.
3. Use a red-light headlamp after dark.
4. Use a 20 mm lens or wider.
5. Check your focus whenever you move your tripod by zooming in on a star, focusing until it is a pinpoint, taking the shot, and checking it; this reduces the number of out-of-focus images.
6. Take a friend, if possible.

Here is the first photo I took at South Windows, taken during the day and with a better angle.



During the Day - South Windows – f/10, ISO 100, 24 mm, 1/125 sec

There are numerous other hikes in canyons along the Colorado River outside Moab. You can hike all the way to the end of a canyon or go as far as you would like and then backtrack.

The canyon we visited had a small river running down to the Colorado River, with shade and trees. This is great for hotter days but be careful about flash floods. Be sure to check the weather forecast and notices before heading into a canyon.

There are also hikes outside the park to enjoy. We hiked the Corona Arch trail, which also has a small offshoot to Bow Tie Arch. This hike is moderately difficult and has some steep drop-offs, slickrock inclines, a chain, and a rock ladder to climb.

The trail crosses an active railroad, but visibility is good, and I think the train comes through only once a day. We saw it pass once on the hike, but I wish I had looked up the schedule to catch it in the canyon at the beginning of the hike.

If you do not want to cross the drop-off area and second ladder, you can still get an image of Corona Arch without hiking the final section of the trail. That is what we did because we still had a lot of hiking to do that day.



Corona Arch – f/9, ISO 100, 98 mm, 1/100 sec

I still have many images to process from this trip, but I hope you enjoyed the sample here. We spent only a week here, with one day in Canyonlands on a jeep ride along Shafer Trail and White Rim Road. Both parks are beautiful, but we found Canyonlands is best enjoyed if you plan on off-roading or doing serious hiking to reach some of the more remote areas.

Column: ON LOCATION

On Location is a new feature in our newsletter. The intent is to go out “on location” with a club member and report back.

Kristin Grudzien and Shannon Hintz called with their On Location shoot idea: Let’s go to Ortonville, Michigan, for the Revolutionary War troop reenactment. I was just okay with the idea until I heard that there would be live cannon fire – then I was all in!

On May 16th we mustered at Seven Ponds Nature Center and headed west to 366 Mill Street, Ortonville. The event was entitled The Road to American Independence: A Special Event and Exhibition on the Campus of the Old Mill Museum. It was truly an amazing place, and I highly recommend visiting this campus with your favorite cameras and lenses, including your cell phone camera for those hard-to-reach shots.

Shannon opened the shooting with the parade shot.



Kristin followed with the musket-loading shot.



It was then I first noticed that these ladies were strapped with 6-shooters: Nikon Z6iii s with some very nice glass.

The Nikon Z6iii Is a highly capable full-frame mirrorless camera featuring a groundbreaking 24.5 megapixel partially-stacked CMOS sensor, which delivers significantly fast readout speeds, inherited flagship autofocus from the Z8/Z9, and advanced 6k internal video capabilities.

The processor is an EXPEED 7 processing system. The autofocus is world-class, with settings for humans, animals, and vehicles among others. The camera features 5-axis in-body stabilization (IBIS) up to 8 stops, an a fully articulating vari-angle touchscreen monitor.

After the exhibition, the parade, the rifle shots, the cannon booms, and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, everyone began milling around (pun intended).

The Mill Museum site includes an old one-room schoolhouse fully outfitted circa 1879. By the laws of higher mathematics, that makes the schoolhouse over 140 years young.

Shannon is a schoolteacher herself and started the shooting with the student's desk below.



Kristin was quick to capture a failing student in the corner. This kid just never learns.



So off we went to our last destination, the Old Mill Museum. The three-story grist mill was built in the early 1850s and harnessed kinetic energy from running stream water using a water wheel.

The wheel turned a grooved mill stone turning the product into powder.

The mill was used primarily to grind corn to feed local farm animals, and cereal grain was ground into baking flour and cornmeal for human consumption.

The Old Mill Museum was built around the mill wheel apparatus and is a three-story farm antique paradise. The various exhibits showcased life from the time of the early Potawatomi people through the early 1900s.

Kristin was fascinated by the old adding and coin counting apparatus, one of the many curious items in the museum from a bygone era.



Kristin also photographed a ladies' hat that caught her eye.



personal favorite. So, of course we bought some items just before we left, in repayment of his kindness and time spent.

We left for lunch at Culver's to discuss the day and their photo interests. They like to go on shoots with each other, and with other club members. They look for action: rodeos, State Fairs, dog shows, horse shows, and other animal-related opportunities.

I came away with a new appreciation for their photographic journeys and enjoyed watching them at their craft. Positions they took while various events took place were well thought-out, and surprisingly different from my angles. I'm fairly sure I learned more from them than they did from me!

As ever.

Meanwhile, Shannon was shooting a classic sewing machine.



NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome ARLENE WAATTI to our club. Arlene joined us in May.

We were all enamored with the young man running the museum, as he was interesting, informed, and a delightful individual. He walked us through the building and showed us his

GDCCC UPDATE

Every GDCCC club that participates in competitions takes a turn judging both digital images and prints. The host club provides three judges who remotely judge the digital images and judge prints in person. Seven Ponds will judge the March digital competition and the May print competition. This means we will sit out and judge instead of submitting images in March or prints in May.

GDCCC Website > GDCCC.org

Click the link above and see what awesome things are happening around the area.

GDCCC 2026 Competition Schedules			2026 DPD Competition		
2026 Print Competition			Submit Digital Image by Friday 11:59 PM	Date of Judging Time Period for Remote Judging	Host Club
Submit Digital Print by 11:59 PM	Date of Judging Arrive by 7 PM	Host Club			
3/22/26 (Sunday)	3/26/26 (Thursday)	West Oakland	2/13/26 (Friday)	Monday-Friday Feb 16-20, 2026	Toledo
4/17/26 (Friday)	4/21/26 (Tuesday)	Windsor	3/6/26 (Friday)	Monday-Friday Mar 9-13, 2026	Seven Ponds
5/17/26 (Sunday)	5/21/26 (Thursday)	Seven Ponds	4/17/26 (Friday)	Monday-Friday Apr 20-24, 2026	Windsor
8/23/26 (Sunday)	8/27/26 (Thursday)	Motor City	5/15/26 (Friday)	Monday-Friday May 18-22, 2026	Lapeer Area
9/11/26 (Friday)	9/15/26 (Tuesday)	Grosse Pointe	9/4/26 (Friday)	Monday-Friday Sept 7-11, 2026	West Oakland
			10/2/26 (Friday)	Monday-Friday Oct 5-9, 2026	Livonia

UPPING YOUR GAME

We are all here to improve our photography skills. Here are practical ways to raise your game through club activities, training, and self-guided shooting opportunities.

1. PARTICIPATE IN CLUB ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Here are the upcoming events and activities in which the club will officially participate over the next three months. Get out and shoot with an SPPC group!

Jul 3, 2026 1st Friday SPPC Fun Shoot 7-9pm [SPPC Fun Shoot at SPNC](#)

Jul 17, 2026. Print and Digital Competition & Focus Topic Review Meeting 7-9pm

Jul 25, 2026. SPPC Fun Shoot [Imlay City Garden with Cindy Bilinsky](#)

Aug 7, 2026. 1st Friday Print and Digital Competition & Focus Topic Review Meeting 7-9pm

Aug 7, 2026 Fireworks at Imlay City Fairgrounds

Aug 21, 2026. 3rd Friday Training Meeting at SPNC

Aug 25, 2026. SPPC Fun Shoot [Astro Shoot at Little Sable Lighthouse](#) with Cindy Bilinski

Sep 28-29, 2026 Metamora Balloon Festival

Sep 4, 2026. 1st Friday Print and Digital Competition & Focus Topic Review Meeting 7-9pm

Sep 13, 2026 SPNC Event [Party at the Ponds](#)

Sep 18, 2026. 3rd Friday Training Meeting at SPNC with Eric Seals [Moving People's Souls](#)

2. PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING EVENTS AND ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Another way to improve is to [seek out training opportunities](#) – at the Club, online, or ad-hoc training with GDCCC and others.

[Nikon Learn and Explore - Tips and Techniques](#)

[Canon Learning and Inspiration](#)

[B&H Event Space - Webinars and Training Calendar](#)

[Hunts Photo Education - Training Calendar](#)

[Adorama Events and Training](#)

[Adobe Learn - Photoshop](#)

3. PARTICIPATE IN SELF-GUIDED SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Get out and shoot by yourself or with family, friends, and club members. There is a list of upcoming self-directed photo opportunities on our SPPC website and Facebook page.

[Seven Ponds Photo Club Facebook Page– Self-guided](#)

About SPPC

Contact Information

Website <https://spnc.photoclubservices.com/>

Email 7pondsphotoexpo@gmail.com

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/SevenPondsPhotography>

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President	Paul Wakabayashi
Vice President 1	Bobbie Lewis
Vice President 2	Shannon Hintz
Secretary	LeeAnn McLaneGoetz
Treasurer	LeeAnn McLaneGoetz
SPPC Classes	Jim Lewis
Digital Projection Division Manager(s)	Germaine Finley, Kristin Grudzien
Print Division Manager(s)	Kristin Grudzien
Competition Printing	Jim Lewis
Focus Topic Manager	Kristin Grudzien
Trip Manager	Germaine Finley, Heather Hoey
SPPC Room Setup	Ken Larsen and Board Members
Facebook Manager	Jim Lewis
Fundraiser Manager	Shannon Hintz
Library Manager	TBA
SPNC Activities Coordinator	Valeta Carpenter
SPPC Website Editor and Newsletter Editor	Rick Gunthner

Seven Ponds Photography Club is a proud member of the [Photographic Society of America](#) & [Greater Detroit Camera Council](#)

