

2026 Focus Topics

Kristin Grudzien and Shannon Hintz

Focus Topics 2026: FAQ

- WHO?
 - Members of Seven Ponds Camera Club
- WHY?
 - To either learn new skills or revisit and/or practice old skills in order to improve photography skills whether you compete during our monthly competitions or just want to improve your craft.
- WHEN:
 - Images shown and discussed during the monthly competition meetings
- WHAT?
 - Topics are published and announced at the February Information Meeting (first meeting of the February)
 - Topics and informational links and yearly overview PowerPoint are posted on our website:
 - <https://spnc.photoclubservices.com/>
- HOW:
 - Submit images on the website if you would like you like them to be discussed (must be set up in system so if you haven't submitted before and are interested, please let us know so we can get you set up in the system.
 - Although submitting images for the focus topic of the month is recommended, you may submit other images for feedback as well.

***Please note: the links and videos were selected as conversation starting points because we thought they had good idea(s), but in no way endorse a particular program or product.

February - Minimalism

- Definition: A type of image making that emphasizes
 - Simple Composition,
 - Uses Empty Space
 - Eliminates clutter
 - Avoids an overabundance of color, patterns or information.

- Minimalism is a tool to reduce life's excess. Focus on what's important. Find freedom, fulfillment and happiness.
 - Joshua Fields Milburn

Minimalism Examples



● Shannon Hintz ●

Resources: Minimalism

- [Minimalism in Photography: Complete Guide for Beginners - Amateur Photographer Guide](#)
- <https://www.format.com/magazine/resources/photography/minimalist-photography>
- YouTube: Minimalist Photography
- https://youtu.be/jrnG2Lrogi0?si=iLp8KYPq2c5_Zl9o

March: Break the Rule of Thirds

- The Rule of Thirds
 - A guideline that has the maker divide the image into nine equal parts using two vertical and two horizontal lines. The subject and/or important elements are placed on the lines or the intersections of the lines.
 - Breaking the Rule
 - Center the Subject
 - Use Symmetry
 - Use Diagonal lines
 - Crop close to the edge

Breaking Rule of Thirds



Resources: Rule of Thirds

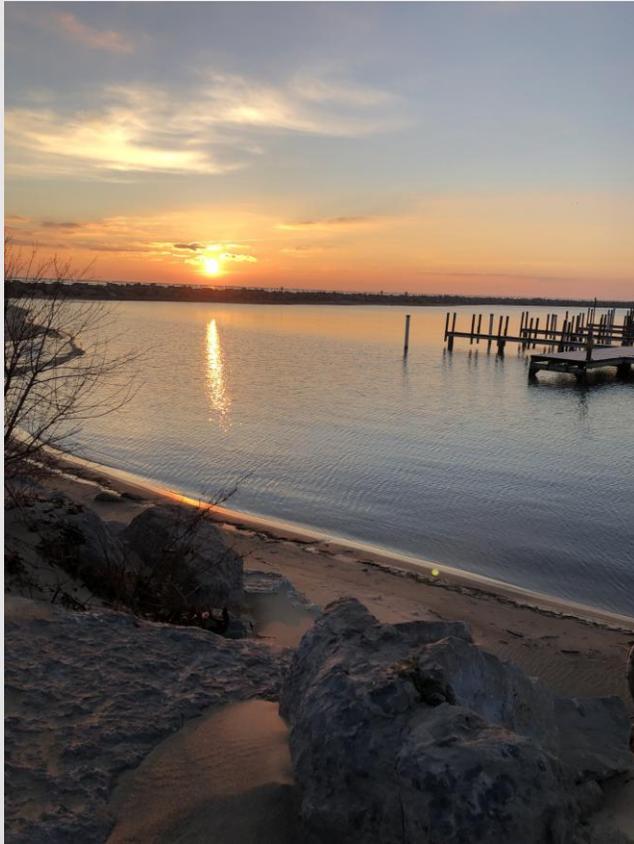
- [HOW TO BREAK THE RULE OF THIRDS - Wild Eye](#)
- <https://digital-photography-school.com/breaking-rule-of-thirds/>
- <https://www.photocrowd.com/blog/10-three-ways-break-rule-thirds/>
- YouTube: How to Break Photography Rules by Mango Street
- https://youtu.be/06zi53J_BBw?si=6lhW1Ggly7BG98PE

April – Golden Hour vs. Blue Hour

- Golden Hour
 - Shortly after sunrise and just before sunset
 - Warm Rich Color
 - Enhances Texture
 - Adds drama and depth
 - Great for landscapes, people and wildlife
- Blue Hour
 - Just before sunrise and just after sunset
 - Cooler tones and hues
 - Light is more diffuse
 - Great for cityscapes, reflections and nature.

Golden Hour vs. Blue Hour

Sunrise 8:10 a.m.



Sunrise 7:50 a.m.



Golden Hour vs. Blue Hour



Resources: Golden and Blue Hour

- <https://naturephotographyhd.com/golden-hour-vs-blue-hour-when-nature-photos-shine/>
- <https://www.photographytalk.com/golden-hour-vs-blue-hour-when-to-shoot-what-in-landscape-photography/>
- YouTube: Golden Hour and Blue Hour Explained
- <https://youtu.be/y0pGQKsAC1U>
- Phone App: The Photographer's Ephemeris
- Sunrise, Sunset, Moonrise and Moonset information

The Photographer's Ephemeris

5:33

The Photographer's...
It's all about the light

Open

1.5K RATINGS 4.7 ★★★★★ AGES 4+ Years CHART #31 Photo & Video

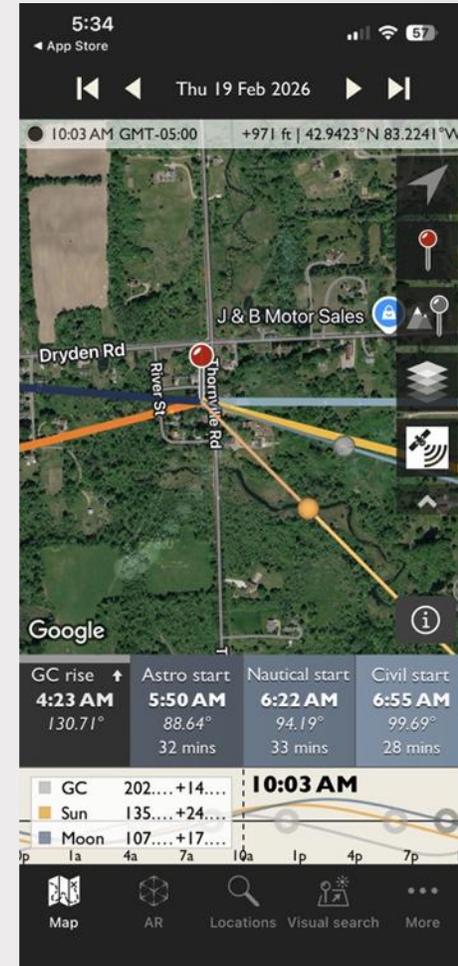
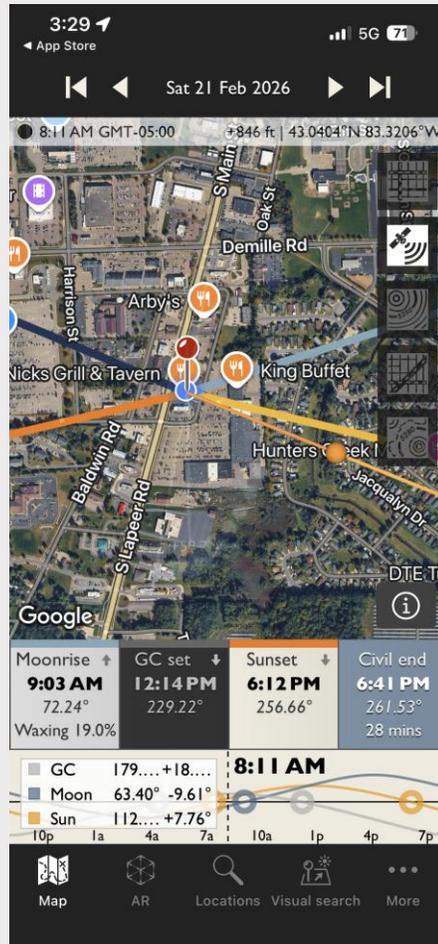
What's New >

Version 4.15.1 9mo ago

4.15.1
- Updates the World Magnetic Model to the 2025 version for current magnetic north [more](#)

Preview

Today Games Apps Arcade

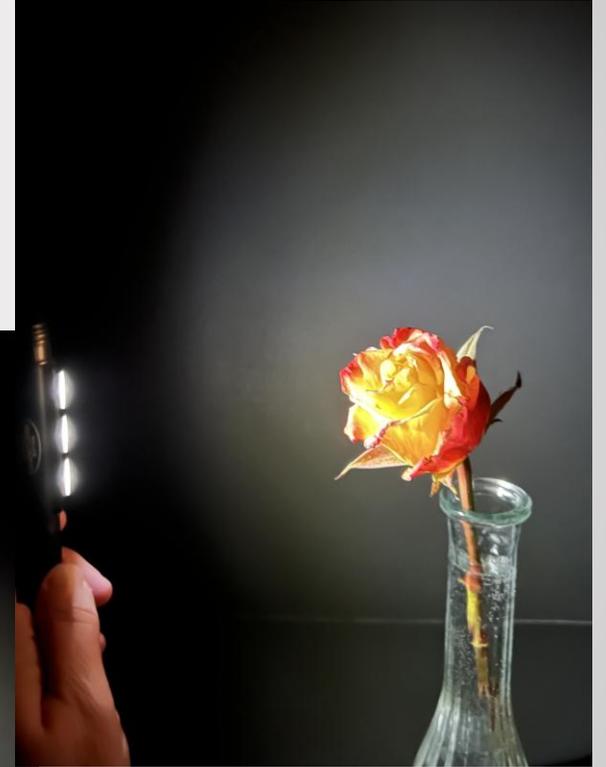
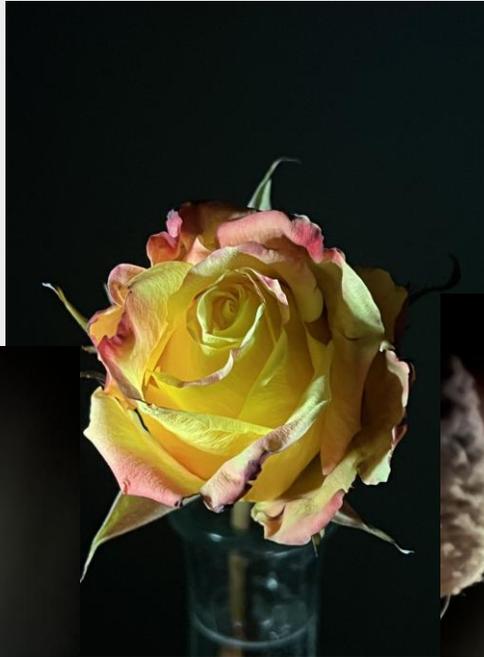


May: One Light, One Subject

- Powerful technique
- Create stunning images with minimal set up
- Maker controls the light direction and effect
- Results in a dramatic and engaging image

- “Wherever there is light, one can photograph.”
 - Alfred Stieglitz

One Light, One Subject



One-Light, One Subject



Resources: One Light, One Subject

- <https://www.viewbug.com/blog/single-subject-photography-5-tips-to-make-one-subject-stand-out>
- <https://www.iphotography.com/blog/one-light-photography-tutorial/>
- https://amateurphotographer.com/technique/portrait_photography/power-of-one/
- YouTube: <https://youtu.be/2a7CFE-TXZY?si=vw6gyudnwTf1TrGv>

June: Storytime; Tell a Story in 5 Images

- Establish the Scene
- Show Action
- Character Portrait
- Relationships
- Conclusion

Tell a Story in 5 Images



Resources: Tell a Story in 5 Images

- <https://www.todorstoyanov.com/crafting-a-narrative-with-a-5-picture-story/>
- <https://bishophorpecc.co.uk/challenge-18-telling-a-story-in-five-images/>
- <https://digital-photography-school.com/8-tips-storytelling-images/>
- YouTube:
- <https://youtu.be/8WPxOJ5UeMA?si=DaH0omRHnT7VMfA1>

July: One Subject, Five Focal Lengths

- Pick a subject of your choosing, a person, a plant, a pet, an automobile.
- Take 5 images,
 - one wide angle (24 or 35mm),
 - one 50mm,
 - one telephoto (135mm),
 - one super telephoto (180 mm),
 - and one long telephoto (240 mm).
- Either submit 4 of the images OR make a collage of all 5

One Subject, Five Focal Lengths



Resources: Focal Length

- <https://fixthephoto.com/focal-length-comparison.html>
- <https://cropfactor.app/>
- <https://focalcrafters.com/comparison-of-focal-lengths>
- Youtube: <https://youtu.be/9Kdev-d-AN4>

August: Motion Study

- NOT International Camera Movement
- Eadweard Muybridge motion studies gave us greater understanding of how animals and humans move in our world. His contributions help lead to the development of the cinema.
- Freeze Motion/Freeze Time
- Show Motion – show how the river moves through the image

Motion Study: Freeze It



Motion Study: Show It



Shannon Hintz



Shannon Hintz

Resources: Motion Study

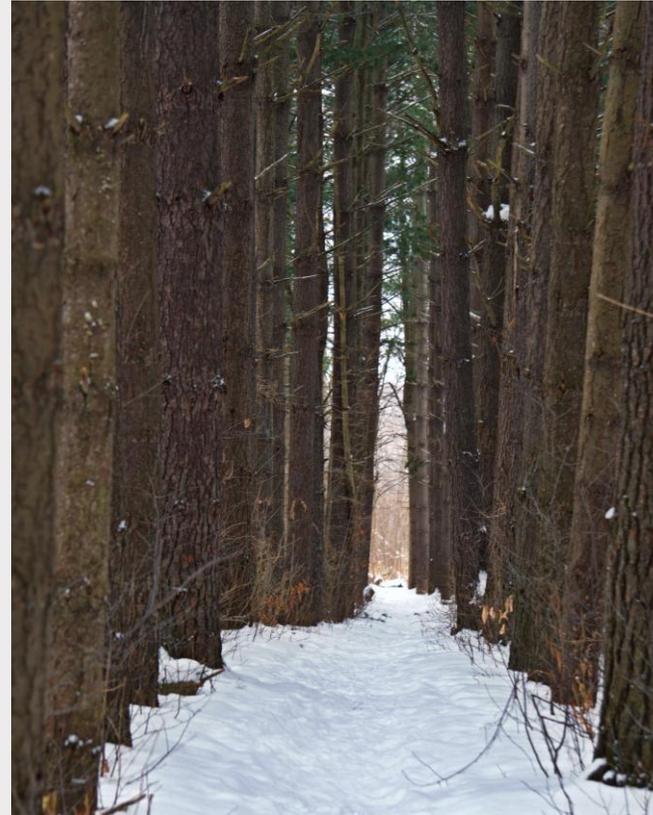
- <https://www.photoworkout.com/movement-in-photography/>
- <https://www.nikonusa.com/learn-and-explore/c/tips-and-techniques/capturing-or-freezing-motion-in-photos>
- <https://thelenslounge.com/movement-photography-techniques/>
- Eadweard Muybridge – What is Motion?
- <https://youtu.be/6XGEq37Dnso>
- Photography Tutorial 10 Action Photography
- YouTube: <https://youtu.be/HMh5UVuy3ps>

September: Leading Lines

- What are Leading Lines?
 - They are compositional elements that guide the viewer's eye to a specific object, subject or area within a frame.

Leading Lines

Does the Horizontal Dock Work?



Leading Lines



Resources: Leading Lines

- <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-are-leading-lines-definition/>
- <https://petapixel.com/leading-lines/>
- <https://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/photography/technique/leading-lines.html?msockid=2ef2216c8d196763276936688c67663f>
- Better Composition: Use Leading Lines to Improve your Photography
- YouTube: <https://youtu.be/9T3zk2LvbYU?si=2jv2FdfQXd1sPCDX>

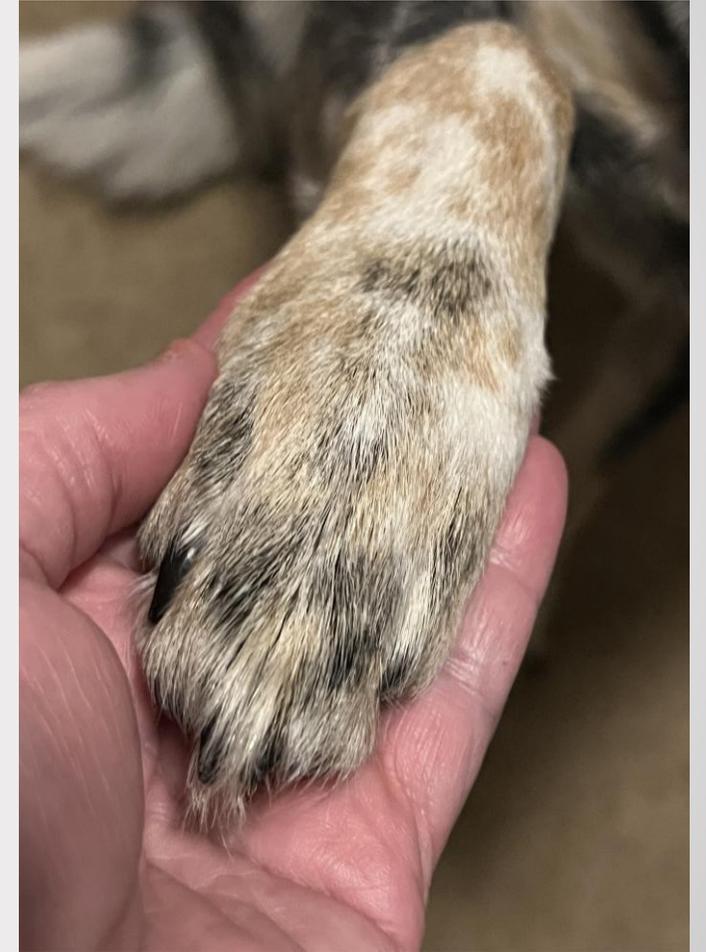
October: Emotion without Faces

- Exploring conveying emotion through color, texture light and symbolism without using faces

October: Emotion Without Faces



Shannon Hintz



October: Emotion Without Faces

<https://www.igottheshotphotography.com/blog/easy-ways-to-capture-emotion-without-photographing-faces>

<https://sofiamartinphotography.squarespace.com/blog-1/photographing-the-unseen-capturing-emotion-without-faces>

<https://www.artfulspacescom.com/capturing-emotion-photography-without-people-techniques-for-evocative-landscapes-and-still-life/>

YouTube: How I Create Emotion without Showing Faces/Street Photography

https://youtu.be/G4urKWUiPX8?si=tnbQulq9_Cn21uoF

November: Can the Background Stand Alone

- When Oliver Klink came to visit us last fall, he posed this question over dinner.
- If the subject is removed from the picture, is the background still a good picture?

November: Can the Background Stand Alone?

November: Can the Background Stand Alone

<https://www.replicasurfaces.com/blogs/updates/the-hidden-power-of-photography-backdrops-why-your-background-matters-more-than-you-think>

<https://lightroom.adobe.com/academy/principles/composition/background>

<https://digital-photography-school.com/backgrounds-in-photography/>

Importance of BACKGROUNDS in Photographs

https://youtu.be/zHoGc_cLbWA?si=r3FwEZq1A0zU5jy9

January: Holidays

- The Holidays can offer unique challenges for photography
- Bright Lights
- Parades
- Parties
- Ugly Sweaters

January: Holidays



January: Holidays

- <https://improvephotography.com/40249/10-simple-tips-better-parade-photos/>
- <https://greatbigphotographyworld.com/holiday-photo-tips-and-ideas/>
- https://www.nationsphotolab.com/blogs/photography-business-and-brand/winter-photography-tips?msclkid=d6e261976e1015ab521d0800d4288352&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=PMax%20%7C%20Products%20%7C%20300%25%20tROAS&utm_term=www.nationsphotolab.com&utm_content=General%20Products
- YouTube: How to Shoot Family Portraits During the Holidays
- https://youtu.be/P6q5bmu6DS0?si=aJP4xtD_52R06iFZ

February 2027: Sweets for the Sweet

- Valentine's Day in February provides great opportunities for photographing tasty treats
- Still Life
- Food Photography
- Children and/or pets with treats

February 2027: Sweets for the Sweet



Sweets for the Sweet

- <https://sweetbiteapp.com/photography-for-confectionery/>
- [7 Best Techniques for Taking Delicious Dessert Photography](#)
- [Candy Photoshoot Ideas – FotoProfy](#)
- YouTube:
- <https://youtu.be/Z2wzj5Yzy7o?si=ZznHdggq0q6MEOb6R>

Ribbons and “Glory” State and County Fairs

- **Just for Fun!**
- Show Your Work in a Different Venue
- Be involved in your community
- Fairbooks can be found online
- Open Category

Use table of contents to locate open photography divisions

Premiums/rules are sometimes found on the division page - check rules/regulations and/or youth division pages if it is not there

Look at fairbook for drop off and pick up information

Enter online

County and State Fairs

- **Armada Fair**
- <https://www.armadafair.org/exhibitors>
- 36 categories single photo and enlargement (72 total)- 3.5" x 5" up to 11" x 14"
- Must mount on backer board appropriately sized to image
- Story boards (minimum 5 pictures) and panoramic up to 22" x 28" - 13 categories each
- Must be mounted with carpet tape to backer boards
- Entry forms due end of June - pictures due at drop off
- Has professional division
- *4 free tickets to return to fair during the week



County and State Fairs

- Oakland County Fair
- <https://www.oakfair.org/p/getinvolved/2025-oakland-county-fairbook>
- 14 single photo categories - 8"x10" - put into clear page protectors
- 1 category creative cropping
- 2 story board divisions - foam board 16"x20" (3-5 photos)
- Has professional division

County and State Fairs

- **Genesee County Fair**
- <https://gcf.org/forms/>
- Entries due July 1, 2026
- ___ divisions, similar to Oakland Fair but last year's book isn't online and 2026 isn't posted yet
- Must be matted and covered in plastic
-



2017 MI State Fair Best of Show
Kristin Grudzien

County and State Fairs

- MICHIGAN STATE FAIR
- <https://www.michiganstatefairllc.com/exhibitorinfo>
- 12 single photo categories - 8"x10" - put into clear page protectors
- 2 photo essay - 8"x10" up to 10 images that tell a story without words in binder with page protectors
- *free entry into the fair with exhibitor pin





Questions?
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Thank You!