

# SVNP NEWSLETTER, JUNE, 2019

There are currently opportunities to give presentations starting in August of this year. Any suggestions you may have for programs – especially of a how-to nature – would be appreciated. Please email ([wah@waynehallphotography.com](mailto:wah@waynehallphotography.com)) or call (978-443-9226) Wayne if you are willing to give a presentation yourself or if you know someone to recommend.

It was a quiet month in the Sudbury Valley. Things conspired to cancel the June meeting. Thus, there are no minutes to report. The summer doldrums seem to have hit the membership, as well. Consequently, there is no news to report either. Let us hope this is good news, all around. See you in July for Susanna Kamon's presentation on the use of trail cameras.

## **Gear vs. Content**

One of my little weaknesses is time spent cruising some of the more prominent photography-related websites. A few of them, such as [dpreview](#), are devoted almost entirely to photography gear. These sites have a tendency to generate discussion that yields little in fervency or tendentiousness to matters surrounding sports, religion or current politics (my  $x$  is better than your  $y$ ...) It's as if the self-image of the correspondents has more to do with the gear they espouse than the content they produce. To the extent that one can treat such discussions as entertainment, well, they can easily possess the same amusement value as roller derby or pro wrestling and not much more significance. It doesn't take reading to the end of a long, arduous thread to grok the underlying concerns. Usually two or three exchanges of sally and riposte will fill you in on the adversaries, their differences (often minor, seldom earth-shaking), their positions (resolutely held and opposite!) and their openness to achieving consensus (say "uncle", dammit!!). The tendency for such threads to arrive at no reasonable decision despite interminable length is all too human, especially on the internet. I sometimes find myself rooting for a participant touting a point of view with which I don't particularly agree simply by virtue of superior spelling or grammar. Flashes of wit within the dull heat count for a lot, in my book.

Some sites are heavily oriented toward content. My starting place for photography on the internet was with the very loosely moderated (and now defunct) PhotoSig. This was a site that was devoted entirely to posting photos for the specific purpose of inviting critiques. The quality of critiquing was all over the map but the site could serve to gauge one's images against the zeitgeist. As one might imagine, while discussions generally stayed civil, at times they could flare into something worthy of the Wild West. Gear hardly ever got mentioned. Another example of a site that features content over gear is [Flickr](#). One can use it successfully without reference to any of the sporadic gear discussions buried in its forums. There are several other photo sharing sites, as well, easily searched for and found.

Some sites, such as [Photography Life](#) and [Cambridge in Colour](#) are largely devoted to instruction and support. Though gear may often be discussed in the attempt to elucidate photography, they make an admirable attempt to remain largely brand agnostic.

And then there are the brand- or mount-centric forums. Due to my choice of cameras, I have become acquainted with two of the better-moderated sites. [Nikonians](#) is devoted, as its name suggests, to all things Nikon. Another is [mu-43](#), devoted largely to discussion of micro four-thirds mount gear. Sites such as these tend to be far more inclusive in their interests than the camera-type focus might suggest. They can be havens for discussions of either gear or content, or the many intersections of the two concerns. Even though they are populated by co-religionists, plenty of nuance remains to be disputed. Consequently, the conversations can go on - sometimes on and on. And on.

But despite all this fetishizing of gear, the rational observer is bound to notice that the overwhelming number of images taken each day are made using simple (Hah!) smart phones. Around 85%, we're told. And, why not? It's almost certain that more money has been invested in improving phone cameras to their current state of progress (which, for most, comfortably exceeds "good enough") than more classically designed cameras. Any digital camera is a computer with a lens and a sensor. Sensor sizes vary between the cell phone (teeny) and dedicated cameras (which run from small through

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“adequate” to huge). The immense computing power of the current smart phone can be harnessed to diminish the difference in quality one might expect from sensor size alone. Not only have the designers been able to wrest competitive imagery from seemingly inadequate gear, but they have made an effort to render their phone/cameras as intuitive to use as possible. As one result, dedicated point-and-shoots are withering away. Why carry two devices when one will do?

So, what have these easily used, automated wonderphones produced? Only a flood of images, the magnitude of which is beyond comprehension. Sure, we can write and say the numbers, but there is no way to look at it all in any meaningful way. Having one’s own camera hooked directly to the internet is an incredible convenience. Having everybody’s attached is a downright scourge. According to some sources, 2015 was the first year in which 1 trillion photographs were taken – a mere couple of billion per day. By my math, if one were to start viewing only these trillion or so photographs from 2015 at the rate of one a second, never stopping to sleep, eat or take care to have a life of any sort, one could hope to finish the task around the year 33728, give or take a couple of decades. And that would leave 2018 to be considered. No thanks.

Before, photographers stood as gatekeepers to humanity’s face; it took training, practice and understanding to produce a persuasive image out of a camera and put it on paper for wide distribution. The time invested in capturing and publishing an image served as a prod to restrict the number of poorly conceived photos.

Now, the gates have been breached and each of us must be his or her own curator. How can a deserving photograph can get noticed in an age that is characterized by instant, unmoderated publishing to computer screens around the world? One way to do this is by, as with Flickr, promoting images that accumulate “faves” or “likes”. One might even see a dash of artfulness here and there. Expect “deep learning” to take over this culling function as its own. Whither creativity then?

And, wouldn’t you just know it? Despite the flood of content which renders the difference in gear just so much noise in the signal,

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there are forums for discussing smart phone cameras... Human nature, I guess. Still, it seems clear that the subsidiary role of camera to phone has muted gear concerns for most, and that content, of whatever quality, is king - for now.

*Hendrik Broekman*

### **July Preview**

Susanna Kamon will present a program titled *Using Trailcams to Discover The Prevalence and Behavior of Wildlife In Our New England Woods*. She writes this about her presentation, "We all have a rough idea of what kind of wildlife we might find in the woods of New England. But how prevalent is each of those species? What kinds of things do they do? What noises do they make? How do they react to each others' presence?"

"If you can figure out where to hang them, trailcams can be an exciting way to begin to answer some of those questions. While image quality and composition may not rival what you could achieve in person with a dslr camera (disclaimer!), being able to observe animals while they are (mostly) alone in their environment offers a new kind of lens to understanding them."

### Upcoming SVNPN Programs

July 11, 2019	Susanna Kamon - <i>Massachusetts and New Hampshire Wildlife by Trail Camera</i>
August 8, 2019	TBD
Sept. 12, 2019	John Slonina (guest speaker) - <i>Unleash Your Landscape Photography</i>
Oct. 10, 2019	Doris and Anthony Monteiro - topic TBA
Nov. 14, 2019	Semi-Annual Member Images Night - theme TBA

Please Note - All meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, at 7:00 pm, at the following location:

Community Room, Newbury Court  
80 Deaconess Road, Concord, MA

Directions may be found at the link immediately below

[http://svnp.homestead.com/files/Directions\\_to\\_Newbury\\_Court.pdf](http://svnp.homestead.com/files/Directions_to_Newbury_Court.pdf)

### Lower Garage Parking

Although Newbury Court wants to extend hospitality to Sudbury Valley Nature Photographers to the greatest extent possible, there is concern that the Lower Garage is being opened unnecessarily for SVNPN members on our meeting nights. Because Newbury Court is always concerned about security, if no one is using the garage, Newbury Court would prefer to keep it closed. If, however, SVNPN members use it regularly or when the weather is bad – snow, rain, etc. – the garage can be opened at those times. Please let Betsy Moyer know (bmga@aol.com) your wishes. Newbury Court will be guided by the members' responses.

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## SVNP EXHIBIT CALENDAR

### Group Exhibits

Ongoing                      Newbury Court - Community Room,  
80 Deaconess Road, Concord, MA  
rotating exhibit

### Individual Member Exhibits

SVNP members - please notify Wayne Hall ([wah@waynehallphotography.com](mailto:wah@waynehallphotography.com))  
of your upcoming individual exhibits for posting on the SVNP website.

Date	Member	Exhibit Location
Ongoing	Marijke Holtrop	Online Exhibit on the website of the Friends of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge ( <a href="http://farnwr.org/gallery.html">http://farnwr.org/gallery.html</a> )
Ongoing	Betsy Moyer	Newbury Court Senior Living, Concord MA Neighborhood Flowers, 5th floor, south bldg
Ongoing	Mark Hopkins, Betsy Moyer, Bruce Langmuir, Charles Lowell, Gene Brockington	Resident and Staff Exhibit, Newbury Court Senior Living, 80 Deaconess Road, Concord, MA (use South entrance)

Date	Member	Exhibit Location
Apr 29-Jul 1	Terri Ackerman	Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 Elm Street, Concord, MA - <i>Reception May 5, 3-5pm</i>
June 5-30	Anne Umphrey	Nancy's Air Field Cafe, Boxborough Road, Stow, MA
July 3-28	Wayne Hall	<i>Time for Reflection</i> Nancy's Air Field Cafe, Boxborough Road, Stow, MA

### An Invitation from your Editor

If having a meatier monthly read is of interest to you then, please, I invite you to send anything you may wish to contribute to future newsletters (a précis of an upcoming presentation, photos, personal news, reviews, neat tricks you find worth sharing, etc.) to me at [henkbroekman@gmail.com](mailto:henkbroekman@gmail.com). Please include SVNPN in the subject line.

I especially invite presenters and members sharing images to select and submit files for illustrative purposes. I expect it would be possible to accommodate two images for main presenters and one each for after-presentation sharing. Generally, expect to see half-column layout along the lines of this example. If you have photos you may wish to share, please submit jpg files sized no smaller than 1200 px on the long side. Submission deadline will be 11:59 pm on the Monday following the meeting. Inclusion in any particular newsletter will be at my discretion based on newsletter length, distribution file weight, current workload, etc.

*Hendrik Broekman*



*You called?;  
photo, Hendrik Broekman*