

# Grand Rapids Camera Club

## Lights & Shadows

MAY 2021 VOL.122 NO. 5



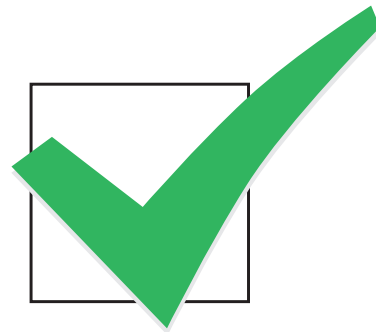
Jan Lewis

### GRCC President Letter

## What's Happening in May...

Please watch your email inbox in the next week or so for a link to cast your vote via Google Forms for Club Officers and members of the Board. I am pleased to announce our slate for 2021-2023.

President: Jan Lewis  
Vice President – Programs: Evie Carrier  
Secretary: Della Landheer  
Board Members:  
Two-Year Terms:  
    Russ Barneveld  
    Steve Port  
    Richard Coombs  
One-Year Term:  
    Kathy Kendall



I want to thank these individuals for stepping up and agreeing to serve the club. We have all heard the saying “It takes a village to make things happen.” That certainly applies to organizations like GRCC. The last year has been particularly challenging - for every one of us – as well as every organization each of us are connected with.

I am proud that GRCC has managed to stay active and engaged despite being unable to meet in person due to the pandemic. Many similar organizations have withered this past year from the inability to come together. Although we have lost some members due to the online meeting format, we have gained others.

Our success is largely due to the dedication of people like our Program VP, Evie Carrier, who has found great speakers (some from places far from Grand Rapids) to present programs over the Zoom platform. Jeanne Quillan, our Competition VP, and Shealyn McGee-Sarns, our Digital Coordinator, have found ways to continue our monthly digital competition and annual Year-End Competition, even when judges can't gather together to view the projected images. (Unfortunately, print competition must still wait for in-person judging). Kathy Kendall has kept the board on track with accurate minutes, Christine Mooney keeps track of the club finances and membership records, Greg Ferguson continues to keep us informed through our well-designed monthly newsletters, and Becky Humes keeps the Facebook page up to date. Board members Russ Barneveld and Steve Port have started our new monthly Editing Challenge which allows members to get involved without the potential stress of scores.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER - Continued from previous page

All these people, along with Board Members James Zeman, Mike Koole and Mike Bergeon are why the club is still viable. I can't thank them enough for making my job as club President a whole lot easier! Please let them know you appreciate what they do to keep the club vibrant.

In the meantime... it's Spring and the birds are singing, the trees and flowers are budding and photographic opportunities abound, whether it be photographing landscapes, sports/ photojournalism, nature, a trip to the zoo to try out the techniques our April Speaker presented, or a portrait of your friends or relatives among the tulips. Get out there with your camera and capture the beauty around you. It will get your creative juices flowing and lift your spirits!

*Jan*

## Do You Know What This Is?

By Greg Ferguson, GRCC Member

I am trying to identify this cable. It is about 36" long and has two ends that are shown below. One end (on the left) has a rounded black cylinder element that looks like a light. If you know what it is and what it is used for, please let me know.



*GREG*  
[gcferguson@me.com](mailto:gcferguson@me.com)



## Our May Meeting

May  
**19**  
Wed.

# Still Life - Beyond Fruits and Flowers

Presented by Betsy Wilson



Betsy Wilson will explore the world of still life photography through her unique perspective. A combination of traditional still life subjects, nature's fascinating still subjects, and a few whimsical and unusual creations, Betsy's still lifes provide studies in composition and lighting. Unlike landscape or street photography, the photographer is in complete control of subject matter, composition, shape, color, depth of field, lighting and presentation. The true skill lies in the ability to take something mundane and everyday out of its normal habitat and transform it into something of beauty by using our skills as photographers.



Broken Eggshells

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### Betsy's Bio



Betsy began learning photography after retiring from a career as a newspaper publisher. Her husband Jim gave her his hand-me-down camera and a lot of encouragement, and she has never looked back. Her passion for photography includes a wide variety of types including macro, landscape and nature photography. In addition to being honored as Photographer of the Year Award at the Chester County Camera Club (in Pennsylvania), she has received numerous recognitions for her artistic photography including a Silver Medal awarded at the Wilmington International Exhibition of Photography, and First Place Award in Photography at the Philadelphia Flower Show. Betsy is an active member of the Chester County Camera Club, and has given numerous presentations and led workshops for area camera clubs.



Vegetable Still Life



Silver Spoons

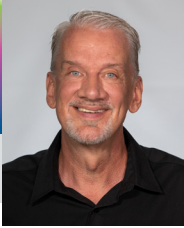
May  
**19**  
Wed.

May 19, 2021 at 7:15 PM

Club members will receive the Zoom meeting link by email prior to the meeting. Guests are welcome to attend the meeting and may request the Zoom meeting link by sending an email to

[programs@grcameraclub.org](mailto:programs@grcameraclub.org) or [info@grcameraclub.org](mailto:info@grcameraclub.org)

Meeting Starts at 7:15 PM (So ask to join 5-10 minutes before 7:15 PM).



## A Short Introduction to Evaluating Photographic Images

By Stephen Burgstahler, GRCC Member



### Who am I?

I am one of those people who almost quit club photography after my first competition. I remember it well. My first image was a closeup of young girl playing with bubbles. It had a great feel and evoked a joyous mood. The comment made by the judge was, "This is a record-shot." Having no idea what a "record shot" was, I could only assume by the disapproving tone and by the pejorative use of the term that it was not a good thing. The comment for my second image went something like, "Why did the photographer amputate the foot off of this lady?" I suddenly felt like a doctor at best, a barbarous human at least. Being a new photographer and club member, a fair amount of embarrassment began to set into my soul. I was tempted to walk, or crawl, away from the club that night. It was a frustrating experience and is surely one of the reasons that I am so passionate about evaluating photographic images to this day.

### "With great power comes great responsibility"

There is a large amount of responsibility that comes with the territory of evaluating/judging. Often a photographer has spent hours creating an image that some judges may look at for a whole of ten seconds before pointing out every technical deficiency they can find, scoring it, and then moving on. What about the message of an image? What was the photographer intending to communicate to the viewer? As judges, we must be careful what we say and how we say it! We owe it to the photographer to equip ourselves so that we know what we are talking about. **Great photographers do not necessarily make great judges.** Great judges are able to encourage, inspire, and deliver necessary criticism in a positive way.

### A few terms (So that we are clear):

**Judging = Evaluating:** When we speak of "judging" we are speaking in terms of evaluating or critiquing an image.

**Rules = Principles for strong composition:** When we speak of "rules" we are speaking in terms of principles for strong composition (e.g., the "Rule of thirds"). There are no rules per se – there are however principles which make for strong compositions. We must first learn the "rules" or principles of composition in order to be able to identify when a photographer has been successful in "breaking" or going beyond them. Do not be quick to lower the hammer on someone who has broken a rule. Rather ask the questions, "**Why** (for what purpose) did the photographer break the rule?" and also, yes, they have broken the rule but, "**Does it work?**" Keep in mind that merely following rules results overall in boring/unoriginal photography.

**Competition = Exhibition:** When we speak of "competition," we are speaking in terms of exhibiting one's images for consideration/critique/evaluation.

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## A word about Healthy versus Unhealthy Club competition

**Healthy Club competition** fosters an environment where iron sharpens iron. Healthy competition is more about improving and growing as a club than it is about winning. Healthy competition will assist a club to grow both in ability and in membership. Longtime members will be happy to share their knowledge with the newcomers and the club will spur one another on to be better and to accomplish great things, all the while being happy (not jealous) for each other's success. The members will appreciate one another and the work that is being produced.

**Unhealthy Club competition** results in an environment where egotism thrives. Unhealthy competition is more about winning than it is about improving and growing as a club. The older members are not keen to share their "secrets" with the newer members. People compare themselves with one another rather than appreciate each other. There is jealousy and a "competitive spirit." In this sense, we must remember that photography is not a competitive sport. Often, a small clique of people develops who consider themselves at the top of the food chain. They see themselves as better than everyone else and are not open to new and fresh ideas. Unhealthy competition has the potential to destroy photographic clubs.

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## A few principles for evaluating photographic images:

### 1. We must strive for a balance between Objectivity and Opinion

Photographers who desire an honest and objective critique of their work will not look for it on Facebook or Instagram. The goal of evaluating is to be unbiased and objective. As judges, you and I must check our own personal likes and dislikes at the door. We must go beyond whether or not we like an image. We must judge what we see. Each image is to be evaluated based upon its own merit and according to the criteria of its genre, and please remember: **All genres are created equal.**

In the process of striving for objectivity, however, we should not completely divorce ourselves from all opinion. Some people may value the opportunity to consider your opinion and would love to hear what you think about their work. The key is to have a **balance**. Do not give an opinion when you should be objective and do not be objective when the time is right for you to offer an opinion.

### 2. Never assume, never assume, never assume!

Judges must never assume. Assuming will get you into trouble. **Judge what you see, comment what you know.** If you don't know, don't assume. Be honest with yourself; if you don't know something, do the research! Be willing to work at it. Remember to always judge what you see in front of you – you don't have to explain how a technique or effect was achieved. Assuming can lead to a loss of credibility.

### 3. Read the image (Identify the message)

We must ask the question, "What does this image communicate?" We must **read** the photograph. Photography is a tool for visual communication, a universal language that transcends the spoken word. **Photography is a human language.** To ignore the story of an image is to fail. To evaluate only the technique and to ignore the message is to fail. Judges must see and not just look.

### 4. What does the image communicate?

A beautiful flower is a message in and of itself, as is an image of Table Mountain. Rather than say, "I've seen so many images of flowers," or, "Not another image of Table Mountain!" I pretend that this is the first flower or the first image of Table Mountain that I have ever seen. I make it a point to disregard all of my preconceived ideas and past experiences of viewing flowers or Table Mountain. This method helps to clear the mind and enable an objective evaluation based upon the merits of the image itself.

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### 5. See (evaluate) the image as a whole

Oftentimes we may be tempted to focus on different elements/parts of an image and we comment on those elements. Have we failed to see how the parts are working together to create a message? That message as a whole may be something greater than the sum of the parts. Strive to see the whole and not just the parts.

### 6. The message in relation to interest

Even if the message is unclear, even if there is a question mark about the message, there should be interest. Interest can raise questions and unanswered questions can be a message in and of themselves. The context may be lacking but the question mark draws attention and interest. These dynamics become the message.

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## What to look for when evaluating an image

Each judge/evaluator must develop her/his own style. I am simply providing three reference points that I personally keep in mind when evaluating images:

1. **Message:** What is the photographer trying to show/tell me? **Why** was the image taken? Identify the subject. What is the first **word** that comes to mind? Etc.
2. **Light:** Does the light enhance/compliment the message and the subject? Has the lighting been done well? If not, what suggestions would you make?
3. **Composition:** Does the composition feel balanced? Does the overall composition support the story and the subject matter?

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## Additionally:

### Be prepared: “If you want to be fair, you must prepare”

Preparation is key for judging – you must be informed – you must understand. Research the Set-subject, study the images in advance. As judges, we are human and we will inevitably miss things. The goal is to keep those instances to a minimum. Judges must understand and appreciate every genre of photography. Strive to be known as a judge who is fair and appreciates all genres.

### Be consistent with your scoring

To be considered as consistent is a high compliment for a judge. Consistency is perceived as fairness. Whether you are a tough judge or maybe a bit more on the lenient side, if you are consistent with your scoring, you will be considered as fair. Studying the images ahead of time and reviewing your scores can be of great assistance in this regard. I personally achieve consistency by scoring all images before the event and then grouping them into folders and comparing them to look for anomalies/ inconsistencies.

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## Tips for commenting:

### 1. Be clear and confident

Confidence results in credibility. Speak with modesty and humility. The purpose of judging is not to prove to everyone how much you know or to show everyone how great you are. Let your critique assist and empower photographers to develop and improve.

### 2. Use the pause

Oftentimes, when nervous, we may be tempted to speak in order to fill the space. Take a deep breath, relax, and use the pause. Don't be afraid to pause. There is an art to a well-timed pause; it can build



anticipation and give the participants a chance to study the image (remember, they have not seen the image yet). Use the pause as a tool.

### 3. Provide reasons for your comments

Generally, people will respect your comments even if they disagree, provided that you offer good **reasons** for your assessment. By empowering and offering a way for the photographer to improve and move forward, you can soften the blow of a lower score. We must have rationale for our comments.

### 4. Deliver constructive criticism in a positive way

It is always possible to deliver constructive criticism in a positive manner. Rather than saying, "This is overexposed", you could say "Try bringing down your exposure in these areas."

I personally depend upon the word "try" consistently when it is time to offer advice for improvement. For example, "Have you tried removing dust sensor spots from your frame". Additionally, instead of saying, "The eye isn't sharp" (which will always spark a debate) you could say, "It is always advantageous to leave no doubt as to whether or not an eye is sharp." Negative aspects within the frame may "draw attention." (You can even let the photographer decide whether that attention is a positive or negative thing.)

### Some final thoughts:

#### Evaluating images will improve your own personal photography

As we learn to evaluate images, not only will we help others to improve, our own photography will benefit exponentially! We will naturally begin to apply the knowledge gained to our own images.

#### Evaluating images brings you to a place where criticism of your own work will be either most welcome or it won't bother you at all

When someone offers criticism of my photography and I see that I have room for improvement, that criticism is most welcome. I want to improve and grow in both my vision and my craft. When someone offers criticism of my work and for whatever reason I do not agree or believe the criticism to be proper or relevant, the criticism has no effect on me at all. I am not bothered. Evaluating images builds confidence!



## GRCC Has YouTube Recordings of Meetings

Recordings of many of GR Camera Club's Zoom programs can be found on the club's YouTube channel [here](#). This link can be found on the club's website at [www.grcameraclub.org](http://www.grcameraclub.org) if you need to access any recording later. It's easy to find...it's on our club's homepage under "Upcoming Events".

You can also go to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for Grand Rapids Camera Club.





## Competition Corner

By Jeanne Quillan,  
GRCC VP - Competition

[photobug49@comcast.net](mailto:photobug49@comcast.net)

# Scapes

One of the categories that members and judges struggle with is understanding the definition of our 'Scapes' category. It seems almost every month we see images that do not belong in the Scapes category, yet they don't get disqualified. Scapes can be defined as:

Scapes are a section or expanse of scenery,  
usually extensive, that can be  
viewed from a single viewpoint.

Generally, there are two types of scapes, landscapes and cityscapes, and you could go so far to call your entry a seascape, or a farmscape etc., but it must be an expanded view of the sea, or an extensive view of the farm.

Landscapes can be further described as a large area of countryside. A Cityscape may be described as an extensive view of a city. Scapes are not meant to imply a single building, lighthouse, bridge or waterfall, no matter how wide or tall they are.

Try to think of it this way...If it's not showing an extended view of land – it's not a landscape. If it's not a view showing an expanse of a city, it's not a cityscape. If it is only a barn its not a farmscape.

*Jeanne*

Questions? Contact me at  
[photobug49@comcast.net](mailto:photobug49@comcast.net) or  
[competition1@grcameraclub.org](mailto:competition1@grcameraclub.org)

## Our Assigned Subject List For 2021

ALL IN A ROW

May ..... All In A Row  
June ..... Odd Or Unusual



September . Rivers  
October..... Nautical  
November.. Harvest Time  
December .. Curves

The Assigned Subject List is available on our website on the Competition Corner page.

## April Image of the Month

Compiled by Jeanne Quillan

The Image of the Month is chosen by one of our members as the image that appeals to them the most. Each month, the honor of choosing the image is assigned to a different GRCC member. This month's favorite image from our April competition was chosen by Rebecca Humes.



© Richard Johnson

"Man in Window"  
by  
Richard Johnson

Chosen  
by  
Rebecca Humes

### ABOUT MY IMAGE:

The photograph "Man in Window" was made in the city of Targu Mures, Transylvania, Romania, during a trip to Eastern Europe. This gentleman looked like an interesting subject, so I raised my camera and he nodded approval. Exposure was 1/200 sec. f/8, ISO 400, Nikon D200, 18-200mm VR at 200mm. I found that people generally welcome being photographed and it inspired several more photographs of people in windows.

- Richard

### WHY I LIKED IT:

While reviewing the images, this one instantly caught my attention. Not only is it quite technically perfect, it draws the viewer in. I instantly want to know what he's thinking, what he's looking at. He is telling quite a story. I don't know if it was set up or not, but either way, great job to the photographer for seeing and creating this image.

- Becky



## Treasurer Reports

Christine Mooney,  
GRCC Treasurer

### A Big Welcome to New GRCC Members!

We have 3 new members who joined our club recently.  
Please welcome:

Linda Rosenthal

Kristine Candela, who shoots with Nikon D3200

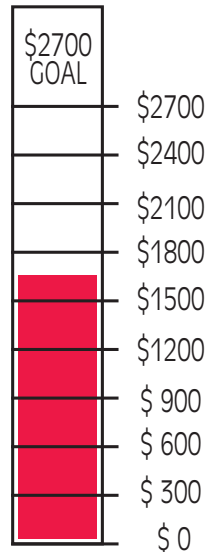
Geoffrey Saint, who shoots with Nikon D850 and  
Canon 5D Mark IV

### New Digital Projector Fund

Thank you to members who  
have donated to our fund.  
The total collected so far is  
\$ 1,643.48 .

We're at  
**60.8%**

This goal is based on the  
Sony VPL-PHZ10  
Laser Projector.  
See November L&S  
for more details.



If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation by check payable to  
GRAND RAPIDS CAMERA CLUB,  
you may send it to our Treasurer at:  
Christine Mooney, 4280 Brooklawn Lane SE, Kentwood MI 49512

### Member Changes

If your email or other information has changed, email me at  
[treasurer@grcameraclub.org](mailto:treasurer@grcameraclub.org)  
to help keep our membership list up to date.

### Membership Dues

Membership runs January through December. Dues are just \$35 for each member. Please check the website for additional information regarding dues. We also have PayPal available on our Grand Rapids Camera Club website for your convenience (a small PayPal processing fee will be applied).  
Click on "Join" tab to find the PayPal link.

If you prefer to pay dues with a check, make it payable to GRAND RAPIDS CAMERA CLUB.  
Send it to our Treasurer at: Christine Mooney, 4280 Brooklawn Lane SE, Kentwood MI 49512

*Christine*



## Deadline For June Issue

May  
**25**  
L&S

**May 25, Tuesday, Noon**

Please add this date to your smartphone calendar.

by Greg Ferguson  
GRCC Lights & Shadows Editor

Before is much appreciated!

*GREG*

[gcferguson@me.com](mailto:gcferguson@me.com)