

Founded 1956



# Nature Photo Times

Member:  
Photographic Society of America & Twin Cities Area Council of Camera Clubs

Vol. 45 , No.7 – March, 2001

## March 21 Program: John Gregor, Coldsnap Photography “A Guide to Minnesota Photography”

**You don't have to travel far and wide for great nature and scenic photography, it is at hand right here in Minnesota.**

Join photographer John Gregor from ColdSnap Photography as he takes us around the state to his favorite photography spots. From the “Big Woods” hills of southern Minnesota to the blue stem prairies of Kittson County in northwestern Minnesota, learn where “Natural Minnesota” really exists. Tour Scientific Natural Areas,



State Parks, Nature Preserves, and roadside ditches on this photographic journey.

For the last four years ColdSnap Photography has been under contract with the Scientific Natural Areas Program of the DNR to provide photography of the SNA sites throughout Minnesota. ColdSnap Photography is a regular contributor to several national and regional magazines. John produced the photography for the April 2001 re-issue of *Northland Wildflowers, A Guide to the Minnesota Region*.

More information about the work and workshops of Coldsnap Photography can be found at [www.coldsnap.com](http://www.coldsnap.com)

Photo of John Gregor by Randy Hagar.  
Photo of white lady slipper by John Gregor.



## Lake Country Journal Magazine

is a bi-monthly, full-color magazine published in central Minnesota. We are always in need of excellent photography and need a broad range of nature and wildlife subjects. If you would like to contribute or request further information, contact Aaron Hautala, LCJM's art director at (218) 828-6424 or E-mail [aaron@lakecountryjournal.com](mailto:aaron@lakecountryjournal.com)

Samples of photography (tear sheets, contact sheets, slides) may be mailed to:

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Our complete writer's guidelines are available online: [www.lakecountryjournal.com](http://www.lakecountryjournal.com)

## Como Park Conservatory Photo Date

**Sunday, March 18, 8-10:00AM**

Spring Flowers (tulips, crocus, hyacinths)

Join us to practice our flower photography. This is one of several times throughout the year when the Conservatory allows photographers to set up tripods inside the building. \$5 admission.

## Elections are Coming

March is the month for thinking about your club officers for the coming year, especially this year since a large turnover is expected. Think seriously about how you may serve the Minnesota Nature Photography Club. No experience is necessary. April is the month for nominations and the election is at the May meeting. The current officers are listed on the back page of the newsletter.

A few years ago the newsletter editor was given officer status in order to expand the number of board members. The incumbent is in his fifth year as editor but does not expect lifetime tenure. If you would like to know more about the position of newsletter editor, call Ron at 763-425-6009.

## Seeing

Many elements go into the making of a fine photograph, but perhaps the most important is SEEING. Today's state of the art equipment allows a rank beginner to capture technically good images on film. Great images may be missed because he hasn't yet developed the ability to SEE. The same equipment in the hands of an artist may yield striking photos because he has an innate ability, or has been trained, to SEE.

Seeing is something we all do unconsciously, like breathing. In one sense, we all see alike. Eyes about five feet above the ground, we look out from that perspective at the rest of the world.

## February Salon

Judges: Vijay Karai and Joe Kandiko

### 10's

Dave Ellenbecker Spiderwort #10  
 Kathy Hobbs Four of a Kind  
 Jean McDonough White and Pink

### 9's

John Dykstra Millenium Hangover  
 Kathy Hobbs A Mouthful  
 Dave Klein Cactus Blossoms  
 Jean McDonough Red Head Duck  
 Sam Stern Loons and Sunset

### 8's

Dale Bohlke One Second to Landing  
 Mariann Cyr Large-Flowered Trillium  
 Jim Duncan Pelican #3  
 John Dykstra Heron w/ Fish  
 Cynthia Fleury Bloodroot  
 Rick Hobbs Feeding Time  
 Dave Klein Damselyfly in Morning

### Dew

Dottie Lillestrand Bear Climbing Tree  
 Terry Neavin Learning to Share  
 Terry Neavin In the Queen's Garden -  
 Bryce Canyon

Vern Nelson Viceroy  
 George Ryan Bottle Brush with  
 Visitor

Duane Wraalstad Northern Hawk Owl  
 Eagle Eyed Eagle Owl

*We are sorry we did not get the name of the photographer of "Eagle Eyed Eagle Owl". Please contact Ron Cleveland or Mariann Cyr so we can publish a correction in the next newsletter and have your name on file for the 2001 Slides of the Year program.*



But in another sense, no two of us sees truly alike. Even standing side by side, we see not only through our eyes, but with our minds. We interpret and select. Everything we look at is filtered through our experiences, emotions, prejudices and preferences. So while we may look at the same scene, we see different pictures within that scene.

To visualize a photograph in your mind, you must focus your senses. Your mind must become the viewfinder, scanning and framing the scene, checking for elements that will make a strong composition.

The artist James Whistler once wrote: "We look at a painting to know the painter, it's his company we are after, not his skill." Photography is no different. When we look at a picture, we like to imagine ourselves in the photographer's shoes. We want to feel what he felt, see what he saw, and come away a little richer for the experience.

Twenty people can look at the same landscape and create twenty different images. Some of those images will inevitably be more compelling. But while there is no best way to photograph a particular subject, there are different ways to express it more artistically.

As a studio photographer I was often faced with a blank background and had to construct the whole image by putting together the design elements that caused people to react in a positive manner to the photograph. As a nature/wildlife photographer I am confronted with all the same elements in my viewfinder, but now I must eliminate or downplay those things I find distracting or unessential to the message I wish to convey.

Our eyes see what we want to see; we filter everything through our experiences and emotions. The camera makes no such distinctions and records everything it sees. It



then becomes the photographer's responsibility to eliminate the distractions and record only those elements that make for a strong composition. Understanding that good composition is simply the strongest way of seeing can improve the photographer's final results. One has the sense that nothing could be added or subtracted from the picture. Freeman Patterson expresses it this way; "The camera points both ways. In expressing the subject, you also express yourself." Therefore, go forth and capture the world on film, fully recognizing that your images just might say as much about you as they say about the subject.

Something to think about!

*Top photo is of the St. Croix River near Osceola, Wisconsin. Lower photo was taken near Cross Lake, Minnesota*

## Locating Subjects

There is an old saying that 20% of the fisherman catch 80% of the fish. That means that the rest of us catch very little fish. Of course there is a reason for that lop-sided percentage. The serious fisherman will know everything there is to know about the fish they pursue. Bottom structure, water temperature, bottom feeder, surface feeder, bait/lures, etc.— these are some of the things that the serious fishing folks need to know to be successful.

This information did not come overnight. I am sure there was a lot of trial and error involved, but I also am sure that they got a lot of information from friends, seminars, books, etc. However, probably the biggest learning tool was just the fact that they had to be on the water to catch fish. Those of us who don't have that dedication probably need to hire a guide if we want to catch lots of fish!

Last summer I was finally able to find the western prairie fringed orchid. This is Minnesota's most endangered orchid. It has also been a great year for me to photograph northern owls. I was able to get some great photos of the northern hawk owl which was my main goal. Hopefully this summer, I will also get some great photos of Atlantic puffins. Of course, all of these things don't come by accident. Like the fisherman, we must also know as much as possible about our subject.

I gathered information about the western prairie fringed orchid by reading the *Orchids of Minnesota* book by Welby Smith. And Minnesota's SNA book told me where to find them. Both of these books gave me the information that I needed, time of year, habitat, and photos, etc. But this was still not an easy task. Even though I knew which SNA to go to it was like finding a needle in a haystack. They are very isolated in this huge SNA and it took me three years to locate them. When I found them last summer they were past their peak, but at least now I know where they are.

Using the Internet has helped me to locate owls this winter. This information can get you to a general area but you still need to know facts about owls because they all have their different characteristics. Also the information from the Internet could be a few days old, and those owls do have wings. Northern hawk owls are one of the few owls



northern  
hawk  
owl

that will hunt in the daytime. They will hunt from the very peak of trees in a semi-open terrain. So if you are in the correct habitat, be sure to look at the very top of the trees—it may be a crow or a magnificent hawk owl.

This summer I am hoping to go to Machias Island to photograph Atlantic puffins. I have already booked the boat, and secured three days on the island. According to the information the best time is middle of June to middle of July. The Charter boat captain gave me suggestions as to film, lens selection, possible weather, puffin characteristics, etc. Also, the information I requested from the town of Jonesport included specific information for me when I explained to them that I was a photographer. One of the other islands is loaded with orchids and blue flag iris. (However, I might be too late for the orchids).

A successful photographer is no different than the successful fisherman, which means we must always be prepared. The best way to do this is to know as much about a particular subject as possible. How do I know that I will be too late for those orchids in Jonesport? The species she told me about was the arethusa and their bloom dates are generally around the end of June. I will be there in early July.

For a Minnesota Photographer, two books that I highly recommend are *Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas* and *Wildlife in Minnesota*. These books are written to help us find a particular subject. The information in these books include location, time of year, directions etc. Armed with this information, now all we need to do is get out of that easy chair and go out and photograph!

One of my goals has always been to get publishable images of Minnesota moose. After reading the *Wildlife in Minnesota* book, I now have some key locations to go and search for this largest member of our deer family. That certainly doesn't mean that those moose are going to be standing around with big smiles on their faces waiting for me to show up with all of my photography gear. Like any photographer I know that it is going to take time and effort for me to be successful in this task.

Good Shooting

*Orchids of Minnesota*, Welby R. Smith, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1993

*A Guide to Minnesota's Scientific and Natural Areas*, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Second Edition, 1999

*Traveler's Guide to Wildlife in Minnesota*, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Carrol L. Henderson, Andrea Lee Lambrecht and others, 1997

## Hot Spot Tip from Dale Bohlke

### Start Thinking Green

Generally any place warm and green is candy for the color starved nature photographer this time of year. One of the earliest wildflowers is the skunk cabbage. Skunk cabbage can be found along Nine Mile Creek in Bloomington. Park west of the bridge on 106<sup>th</sup> Street West, walk down the steps, cross the creek, then turn right to find the skunk

cabbage. They will be close to the trail on your left. Please tread lightly since the habitat is very soft.

Start looking for these flowers as soon as there is bare ground visible. If you are adventuresome find the trail on the right of the parking lot and follow it to the bluff to see if an early pasque flower is blooming.

# Nature Photo Times

published Sept-May by the

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

March 21 Agenda

### Members' Slide Salon

*Judged by John Pennoyer and John Gregor*

&

### A Guide to Minnesota Photography

*presented by*

*John Gregor - Coldsnap Photography*

The club needs a new slide projector, preferably a one-at-a-time Leitz like our old one. Any suggestions? Contact any officer. Thanks!

## Tell a Story

Dale Bohlke

How do I get the whole flower in focus? Do you want everything in focus? In other words do you want maximum depth of field to tell your story? I prefer to think of depth of field as a "zone of sharpness." The maximum sharpness is approximately the middle of this zone.

Turn off your autofocus. Autofocus may lock on the front edge of a subject resulting in a loss of up to half of the zone of sharp-

ness. Manually focus behind the leading edge of the subject to utilize the entire zone of sharpness. I start with an aperture of f16 and bracket for this zone of sharpness. Successive shots are taken at f22, f27, and f32. With apertures this small shutter speed may be a couple seconds.

A depth of field preview button is also great for this purpose. Does your camera have this feature? If it does it will be explained in the manual.

Look over your slides, which aperture worked best? Are you getting too much motion because of slow shutter speeds? Maybe flash is the answer. More options, more film, more, more, more.

## Projector Wanted

Do you have a surplus KODAK Carousel projector with auto focus and remote control? If so, call John Jenkins 651-489-9469

## Welcome

Please update your member directories to include the following new or renewing members

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Nature Photo Times (color version) and other information about the club is available at  
<http://www1.Minn.Net/~rcland/MinnesotaNaturePhoto.htm>