

JANUARY, 2026

Crystal Lake Camera Club

Serving Crystal Lake, IL and Surrounding Communities Since 1980

crystallakecameraclub.com



Still Life - Fruit

Color Image by Mel Marilim (Shown at the December 9 Meeting)
Read Mel's comment about this image on Page 2

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IMAGES FROM THE DECEMBER 9 MEETING

The image to the right and on the cover are by Mel Marilim.

Mel said -

“Still Life-Fruit (cover image): This picture was inspired by a similar photo I saw online. I tried to copy it with minor tweaks. The only source of light was from a window. I used a black cloth for my background.

Two Peas in a Pod: To make this image, I clamped a pea pod to a stand, used a black cloth for the background, and backlit it with a flash. I then added a little front light to bring out the details in the peas.

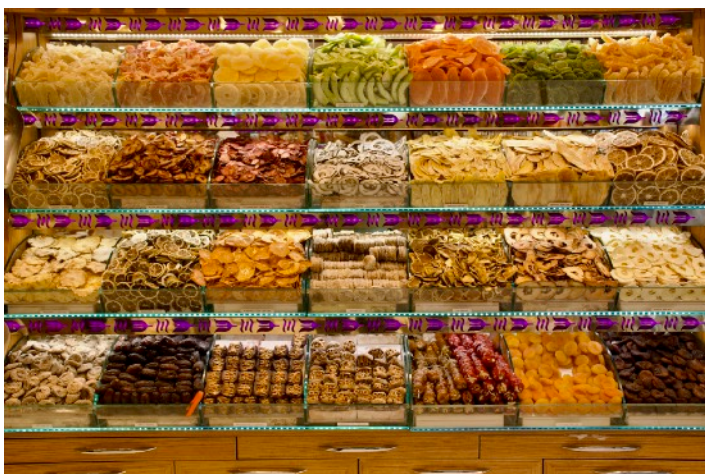


Two Peas in a Pod



Candy Store, Honfleur, France

These three food images are by Steve Szalaj.



Dried Fruit, Grand Bazaar, Istanbul



Thanksgiving Dinner

IMAGES FROM THE DECEMBER 9 MEETING



A Big Bucket of Water



Blue Heron at Lift Off



Birds & Moon

The images on this page and two on the next are by Russ King.

They are all meant to show movement or the appearance of movement.



Bull Riding Result



Chickadee & Feeder in the Rain

IMAGES FROM THE DECEMBER 9 MEETING

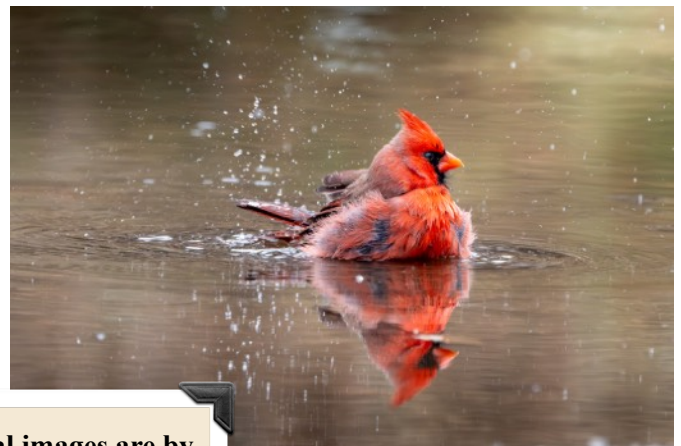
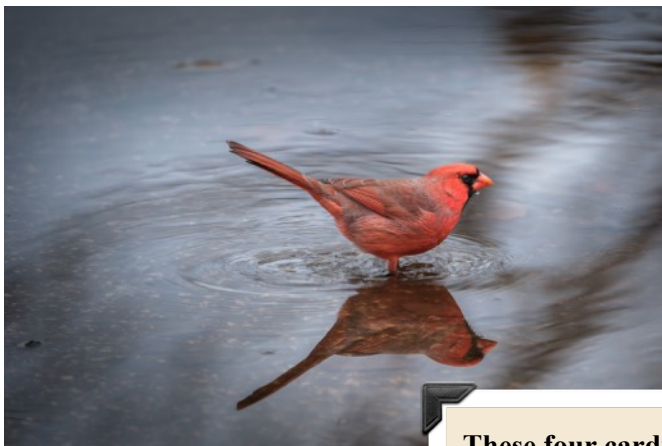


Fighter Jet on Stand

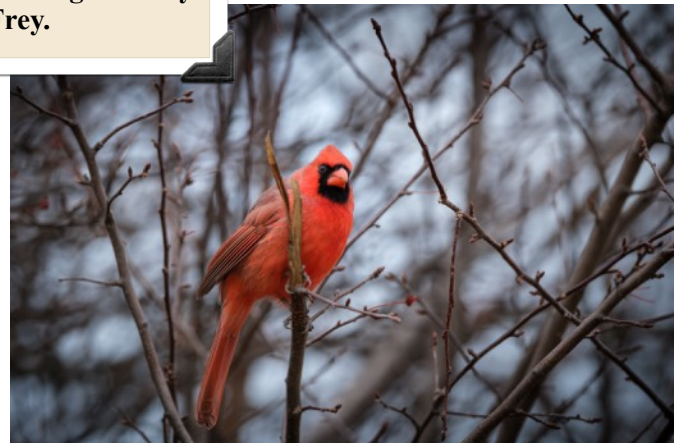
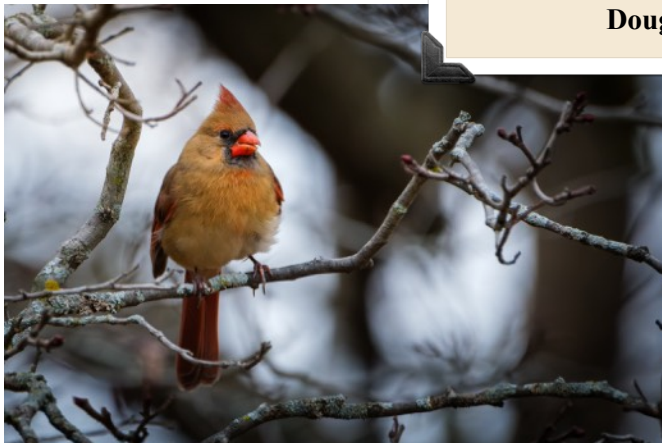
The two images (left and below) are by Russ King.



The Hummingbird and the Bees



These four cardinal images are by Doug Frey.



IMAGES FROM THE DECEMBER 9 MEETING



**These four snowy owl images
and the two of photographers taking pictures of the snowy owls
are by Doug Frey.**



THE FUTURE OF CLCC

Notes from the December 9 Meeting ~

Submitted by Steven Szalaj

There were 14 members at the meeting this month. The meeting began at 7PM with Gail, CLCC Treasurer, reported that the club bank account has \$3380. We are also reminded that it is time to pay the \$25 annual dues. You can give cash or a check to Gail. There was an excellent presentation by CLCC member Peter Pelke, *Better Black & White* (see summary on pages 6-7). *Show & Tell* and *Before & After* had four people contribute this month.

Show & Tell - The topic of the month was **Fall**.

- Russ King: Photos showing “movement”
- Mel Marilim: Peas, Still Life - Fruit
- Steve Szalaj: photos showing “food”
- Doug Frey: Showy Owl, and others

A REMINDER: **Show & Tell** and **Before & After** run more smoothly if images are sent to Doug before the meeting instead of on flash drives given to him at the meeting. He would like them a few days before the meeting so he can prepare the presentation. See page 9 for more information.

The January meeting will showcase your BLACK & WHITE photos inspired by Peter's December presentation for *Show & Tell*, as well as any images of the January theme, *SNOW*. *Before & After* is always interesting especially if you are new to editing. Be sure to send your images to Doug - both successful images and problem images.

Take a moment to contribute to the Facebook **Crystal Lake Camera Club Group Chat** page (see page 9).

The **Landscape and Nature Photography** small group is meeting regularly on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Doug Frey's home (see page 14).

Have an idea for an outing? If you have an idea or plan and want company, let Doug Frey know.

The **CLCC Breakfast Meeting** is the *last* Saturday of the month (unless otherwise noted due to holidays, etc.) at Buttered Toast by Home Depot on Randall Road, Algonquin. All are welcome. Let Karl G. know ahead of time if possible, but don't let that stop you if you didn't (see page 9). The next breakfast meeting is Saturday, January 31.

Become an ACTIVE CLCC member - your presence, your contributions, your participation is what will elevate the club experience for everyone. Most everything that happens in the club is by volunteers, that is, members choosing to participate because they *love photography*. CLCC needs *you*!

IT'S TIME TO PAY CLCC DUES FOR 2026

Dues are \$25.00 for the year. Please give check or cash to treasurer Gail Schulz when you attend your next CLCC Meeting

BETTER BLACK & WHITE

A Presentation by CLCC Member Peter Pelke II

- B&W is an abstraction
 - Learn to see in B&W
 - You can create your own version of reality
 - Sharpen your black and white vision by using a Tiffen B&W Viewing Filter
- Focus on the quality of light
- Sometimes color is a distraction; it can pull our eyes in the wrong direction
 - The image is distilled down to the elemental components of line, shape, and form, with only black, white, gray and the contrast between them
 - Regularly shooting with an absence of color, you train your eye to become accustomed to universal photography elements that benefit all images
- Histogram shows exposure for the shadows and highlights
 - Be careful not to over-expose highlights
- Pay attention to your own eye movement thru an image
 - What do I see, What do I feel, What can I eliminate...
 - Vision is especially important, pre-visualization helps to know how you are going to shoot the image and how the final image will look...
- Is this a compelling image and subject?
 - Certain photographs feel timeless, emotional and more impactful in the right context
- How will I compose this image?
 - B&W teaches concentration on only the lines, shapes, forms and contrast, which combine to produce a beautiful composition
 - Have I composed the image to eliminate distractions?
- What is the contrast of the subject relative to the scene?
 - You can play with lighting and shadows, how they contrast and juxtapose each other within a composition for dramatic effect
 - Where are the differences in luminosity (brightness)?
 - Will the sky and clouds look better in black and white?
 - How can I maximize the contrast of the entire image as a whole?
- What is the best depth of field for this image?
- Does my background need to be sharp or blurred? Have I composed the image to eliminate distractions?
- The four essential elements of a B&W image
 - **Contrast** - The difference in brightness between light and dark areas of an image
 - A smooth gradation of tone from the deepest black, through all the shades of gray, and up to the brightest white
 - **Shadow** – The dark area or shape produced by a body coming between rays of light and a surface.
 - Use shadow to focus the brain's attention
 - Shadows can be re-shaped, and re-positioned
 - **Shape** - The external form, contours, or outline of someone or something
 - Can become a defining element of a highly successful black and white photograph
 - Evaluate the value of a shape based on contrast and tone

Better Black & White (continued)

- **Texture** - The perceived surface quality of an object within the image that gives the viewer a sense of its tactile feel, such as roughness, smoothness, softness, or hardness
 - Revealed when a light source “skims” across a textured surface
 - The lower the angle - from the light source to subject - the more that the light will create highlights and shadows across the textured surface
 - Identify the textures you want to bring out, then position the light source to do that
 - Shining from the camera position directly to the subject is 0°
 - Texture will be minimal
 - Increase the light source angle to either side
 - Texture becomes more visible
- Study the Masters and see what they produced, then emulate and innovate
 - Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946)
 - Edward Steichen (1879-1973) Edward Steichen
 - Paul Strand (1890-1976)
 - Ansel Adams (1902-1984)
 - Edward Weston (1886-1958)
 - Brett Weston (1911-1993)
 - Yousuf Karsh (1908-2002)
 - Wynn Bullock (1902-1975)
 - Huntington Witherill (1949-)
 - Vivian Maier (1926-2009)
 - Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
 - Diane Arbus (1923-1971)

When to try Black & White

Minimal Color in Scene	Detail/Texture in Scene/Object
Dramatic Landscape/Sky	Abstract/Surreal
Crappy Weather	Old Wrinkled People
Harsh Lighting	Historical Events/Reenactors
Somber Mood	If in Doubt, try Black & White

BLACK & WHITE = LOOK FOR

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Lights and Darks | • Quality of light Harsh or Soft |
| • Shapes, Patterns, and Texture | • Composition – Where do the eyes go? |
| • Tonal Contrast | • Eliminate Distractions |

CLUB MEETING CALENDAR

All meetings start at 7PM and are at the Algonquin Township Building, 3702 Northwest Hwy, Crystal Lake, in **Meeting Room 2**. Enter at the back of the building.

- January 13 *Image Theme: Snow*; Show & Tell; Before & After - bring black & white images showing your work after the December presentation
- February 10 *Image Theme: Street Photography*; Presentation, *Street Photography*; Show & Tell; Before & After
- March 10 *Image Theme: Photo Workshop Experiences*; Show & Tell; Before & After; bring photos from, and tell us about any workshop experiences you've had

Show & Tell and **Before & After** have provided some lively, informative conversations for CLCC attendees. Great suggestions for outings and club offerings have come from these activities.

For Show & Tell: submit 3-4 JPG images to Doug Frey (doug.frey@me.com) on the **Sunday before the meeting** date. You can also bring them on a flash drive, but submitting them earlier is preferred, and helps the presentation go more smoothly.

For Before & After: submit *pairs of JPG images* to Doug Frey (doug.frey@me.com) on the **Sunday before the meeting** date, or bring the images on a flash drive (submitting them earlier is preferred, and helps the presentation go more smoothly). The pairs would include the image as it came out of the camera and the image after post-processing. Be prepared to tell (and perhaps even show) the changes that were made.

Join the **Crystal Lake Camera Club Group Chat** on FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/446897199179146> or scan this QR Code:

This is a closed group, so only members have access. Request membership through the page. Then, post your favorite images, join in the discussions, share information about photo outings, speakers, contests, etc.

Only group members will see your posts.



Last Saturday Morning Breakfast Meeting – Everyone invited!

Please join your CLCC friends for the casual breakfast meeting on the last Saturday of the month. Lively discussions, good food! This month's will be on **Saturday, January 31, 2026, 8:30 AM** at

Buttered Toast Restaurant, 2520 Bunker Hill Dr, Algonquin.

RSVP to Karl-Heinz Gabbey (khgabbey@aol.com) if you plan to attend.

Next month's breakfast meeting will be February 28.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE YOUR IMAGES!

Aroma Coffee & Wine, 77 E Woodstock St, Crystal Lake, IL 60014, aromacoffeeandwine.com

Russ King shared that *Aroma* is putting photos on their walls, and that he has several pictures hung until the end of January. The owner is Dawn Kincaid, and will likely be looking for more after the current display is taken down.



KUDOS FOR CLCC MEMBERS!!

This past New Year's Eve at The Dole *Masquerade in the Mansion*, the **NMP Invitational Exhibit** opened, with art and photography that had been shown during the previous year at the *4th Friday Art Events*. Among the 70+ works exhibited are three from CLCC members:

Jeff Chemelewski: *Symmetry in Nature*

Steve Hillmann: *Rod and Reel*

Doug Frey: *The Old Farm House*

CONGRATULATIONS to Jeff, Steve & Doug for being invited to show in the **NMP Invitational Exhibit**.

The exhibit will be up through January 16th. If you are interested in walking it, contact Nancy Merklings via text at 816-347-8535 and she can make that happen!

To enter the *4th Friday Art Events*, see the article on page 11.

And another CONGRATULATIONS for Steve Hillmann! A

select 15-piece collection of his work is on display at the Algonquin Area Public Library! The exhibition will be up through the end of January. Stop by if you get a chance!

We are proud of these CLCC members!



GALLERIES, STORIES, VIDEOS AND INSPIRATION ON THE WEB

(Click any bold-face heading, or underlined text, to follow the link)

Photo Essay: The Relief of the Moment

In this essay and accompanying photos by photographer Nick Ward, he discussed his personal relation with his art, and how it has helped him. He starts with: "Photography tricks my ADHD brain into doing something borderline miraculous: It allows me to focus on exactly one thing at a time. When I press the shutter and hear that lovely little ka-chunk, the inner chatter winks out."

3 Must-Visit Sites For Finding Free Stock Images

Spruce up your digital content without breaking the bank. Or look for inspiration.

5 Astonishing Landscape Photos Capture Some Of Nature's Most Delicate And Dramatic Moments

From Namibian dunes to Icelandic icebergs, the special category winners in the Landscape Photographer of the Year 2025 contest offer a lot for photographers to learn from.

How Advances in Digital Printing Are Blurring Boundaries Between Photography and Art

This article by James Welling for [artnews.com](https://www.artnews.com) discusses the influence of digital technology on art and photography since the 1980s. Quickly but quietly, new printers changed what a photograph could be, even blurring the line between image and art object.

Did the Camera Ever Tell the Truth?

The camera is a tool — but to do what? Images shape our daily life, yet we rarely question how they're made or why. This 17-minute video, "Death of a Fantastic Machine," is a short version of the documentary, "Fantastic Machine." The focus here is on something that emerged as the key factor: how economic forces have shaped what we see, from the earliest photography to the algorithms and A.I. of today. Thought provoking...and scary.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW YOUR IMAGES!

4th FRIDAYS ART EVENT AT THE DOLE

401 Country Club Rd
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
815-347-8535

The next 4th Friday Art Event: **January 23, 2026**

Submission Deadline: Sunday, January 11, 2026, 11:59 PM

Non-refundable submission fee: \$40 for up to 5 pieces submitted

Cash Awards - \$450 total:

- 5 Honorable Mentions: \$50 cash each
- 4th Fridays Team Choice: \$50 cash each
- Kim Holz Memorial Award: \$50 cash
- Nancy Merklings Choice: \$50 cash
- People's Choice Award: \$50 cash



Click here for the **PROSPECTUS** for the Photo-Only Exhibit.

Click here for the **SUBMISSION APPLICATION**

*Note: Photos may also be submitted to the Mixed Art Exhibit, especially if the photo is larger than the requirements for the Photo-Only Exhibit. Click here for the **Mixed Art Prospectus**.*

IMAGE THEMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

JANUARY THEME: SNOW

How do you show motion in a still photo? Do you have some examples? How did you achieve it? Share some of your images with CLCC!

To help you plan ahead, these are the Image Themes for the next several months:

January 13	Snow, and <i>Before & After</i> of Black & White photos from the December presentation
February 10	Street Photography
March 10	Photo Workshop Experiences

Please submit your images to Doug Frey on the Sunday before the club meeting. *Show & Tell* and *Before & After* run more smoothly if Doug can prepare the presentation. See page 9 for more information.

CRYSTAL LAKE CAMERA CLUB OFFICERS

See The Club Directory For Contact Information

President	<u>Judy Jorgensen</u>
Secretary	Open
Treasurer	<u>Gail Schulz</u>
Board Member	<u>Rich Bickham</u>

YOUR IDEAS MATTER!

Do you have a story, images, trip, post-processing technique, event, etc. that would be good for Camera Club members to know about? Your submissions will make this newsletter valuable! Write it up, and send it to **Steven Szalaj**, Newsletter Editor, at szjsings@mac.com.

Please make your submission by the 22nd of the month.

Helpful Resources - New links added!

Contribute to this page! If you have resources that you find useful, please share that link with me. Include a short summary of what can be found in the link. The reference can be a video, web page, PDF, or any other format that has an online link. Send your contributions to szjsings@mac.com by the 20th of each month.

~SJS, Newsletter Editor

Profoto Tutorials, submitted by Kevin Getty:

Tips and Tricks

<https://profoto.com/us/tips>

A terrific collection to help photographers of any level.

Photographic Composition Webinar, submitted by Scott Larsen:

The Art of Photography: Crafting Compelling Compositions

tinyurl.com/5ak88xt6

Natural Habitat Adventures posts a weekly webinar. This hour-long video is very helpful.

Photographers you may be interested in viewing, contributed by Judy Jorgensen:

Dan Anderson

danielandersonphotography.com/

Beautiful color landscapes and seascapes with striking composition from America, Norway, Faroe Islands, Scotland, Patagonia, Ireland, Antarctica, Europe, Iceland, etc. If you love black and white, check out his American West, Europe, Antarctica, and Greek islands black and white images of land, sea, and architecture.

Ed Callaert

edcallaert.photoshelter.com

This nature photographer travels extensively along the west coastal and mountain states as well as upper to mid east coast United States. His gallery is full of colorful landscapes and seascapes with interesting composition techniques you may want to try.

Willard Clay

willardclay.photoshelter.com

This landscape and bird photographer has a vast collection in his gallery by states and a stunning collection under birds. He also teaches at Mayslake in the Forest Preserve District of Dupage County. Enjoy, study, and try.

Resource for camera repair, contributed by Bill Batalden:

APS (AUTHORIZED PHOTO SERVICE)

8125 River Dr # 100

Morton Grove, IL 60053

repair@authorizedphotoservice.com

(800) 406-2046

Bill said: "I recently had my camera & lens repaired at APS authorized camera repair. I felt the work was good and the price reasonable. They give an estimate, which you have to approve, before proceeding with the work. When I spoke with the owner, he said he could offer a 'Club' rate."

Helpful Resources (continued)

Resource for camera repair, contributed by Sandy Wittman:

ROYAL CAMERA SERVICE, INC.

1134 E Lake Street

Hanover Park, IL

(630) 372-6150

Sandy said: "I had my Canon 7D Mark II repaired there this fall. They did an excellent job in about 10 days. The price was very reasonable. I found them to be knowledgeable and professional."

Resource for infrared photography, contributed by Peter Pelke

LIFE PIXEL Infrared Camera Conversions

<https://www.lifepixel.com/>

(866) 610-1710

Resource for purchasing, selling, trading and repairing used camera equipment

KEH

<https://www.keh.com/>

(800) 342-5534

"The original curator and reseller of rare and quality camera gear, KEH has always envisioned a better way to support the passion and profession of photography. We're proud to be the camera community's choice for gear that goes further. Field-tested. Expert-graded. Sustainable. Exchangeable. KEH-approved."

YouTube Channels by specific photographers

These were contributed by Doug Frey:

Nigel Danson - <https://www.youtube.com/@NigelDanson>

Adam Gibbs - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDyKBQGE7OOsWeQIPWqVSzw>

fototripper (Gavin Hardcastle) - <https://www.youtube.com/@fototripper>

Simon D'Entremont - https://www.youtube.com/@simon_dentremont

Mark Denney - <https://www.youtube.com/@MarkDenneyPhoto>

Thomas Heaton - <https://www.youtube.com/@ThomasHeatonPhoto>

Ian Worth - https://www.youtube.com/@ian_worth/

A great collection of "how-to" videos:

Providence Photography DFW

<https://www.youtube.com/@providencephotographydfw>

Photoshop Elements+: The Secret to Removing Impossible Backgrounds!**Take Better Photos Episode 3 - ISO and Exposure** (click the title)

Video shared by Bill Tell. Bill said: "*In my experience, this video is essential for anyone who wants a deeper, more complete understanding of exposure and is ready to move to the next level.*"

Capturing the Perfect Holiday Tablescape Just in Time for Thanksgiving! (click the title)

Shared by Peter Pelke - an in-depth article that covers lighting, angles, composition, techniques, gear, and much more.

*Helpful Resources (continued)***Adobe Lightroom Classic - Tips and Tricks for a better workflow**

Shared by Bill Tell - *"I've been watching a lot of YouTube videos on Lightroom Classic, and this is by far the best one yet. It's packed with solid tips you can apply to virtually any LRC workflow and settings. Incredibly helpful. It will make your post-processing much easier."*

Photo Op At the Morton Arboretum***Vivid Creatures***

An exhibition of giant, colorful sculptures as tall as trees

Guests of all ages can delight in an oversized deer, snail, squirrel, dragonfly, and sandhill crane—all native to northern Illinois—depicted in brightly decorated larger-than-life artworks up to 24 feet tall. The sculptures will be placed among the tree collections and natural areas of The Morton Arboretum.

The five sculptures were created exclusively by **Fez BeGaetz and Heather BeGaetz** of Portland, Oregon. Go **behind the build** and read about the inspiration and creative process behind the sculptures.



Vivid Creatures is free and is included with general admission to the Arboretum. Members always get in free and can visit any time without purchasing general admission. **More at mortonarb.org**.

LANDSCAPE & NATURE SMALL GROUP

When: Third Wednesday each month, 7PM

Where: 711 Glacier Parkway, Algonquin

Phone: 224-406-3692

RSVP: **doug.frey@me.com**

This small group meets in Doug Frey's home on the Third Wednesday of the month, 7PM. There are wide ranging discussions from beginning landscape photography, to post-processing, prime locations, both near and far, everything in between, and sometimes beyond! Photos are shared and comments made. It is a very friendly group.

Meetings are casual and relaxed. Any related discussion topics can be brought up. It is a great community learning experience. Let Doug know that you are interested! See him at a club meeting, or send him an email at the address above.

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL 6X6 PROJECT ART AUCTION AND FUNDRAISER

Raue Center's **6×6 PROJECT** fundraiser and online art auction & exhibition celebrates its seventh year of supporting arts with Art! All proceeds benefit Raue Center's fine arts education programs, **Mission Imagination** (MI) and **Raue Center School For The Arts** (RCSA), which has been enriching the lives of over 20,000 kids a year in the local community since 2001.

Artists of all ages and abilities are invited to participate by creating original works of art, in a variety of mediums, on 6×6" canvases. Since the inaugural event in 2019, 6×6 Project has raised over **\$112,000** for MI and RCSA with canvases coming from around the nation!

Create a mini-masterpiece and support the arts in your community!

Several of our CLCC members have participated in this event. It is a good way to get your images seen by a public that loves art, and you are supporting an arts venue right here in McHenry County. Entering is easy! Complete instructions are at the **6x6 PROJECT WEBSITE**.

Purchase one or two 6" X 6" canvases from the project partners (listed on the website and below) for a \$5 donation per canvas. They are available now through May 1, 2026. You must use these official canvases. Mount or print an image on the canvas and drop your artwork off by **May 15, 2026**. All artwork submitted to the **6×6 PROJECT** will be available for viewing and bidding online at **Auctria.com** beginning **June 13, 2026**. Artists and the public are invited to our reception on **June 27, 2026**. All canvases will be displayed at the reception - bidding will continue through the end of the reception.

[Click here for the Artist Call](#) (Information about entering)

[Click here for Information about the Reception and Awards](#)

Project Partners - You can get the required canvases at these places:

Abalabix Books – 30 N. Williams St Unit A, Crystal Lake, IL | (815) 893-6653
 Creative Arts, Inc. – 400 Highland Avenue | Crystal Lake, IL | (815) 219-9243
 Reprographics – 26 Crystal Lake Plaza | Crystal Lake, IL | (815) 477-1018
 Piano Trends – 35 Berkshire Drive | Crystal Lake, IL | (815) 477-4266
 MainStreet Arts Center – 20 E Main St, Lake Zurich, IL | (847) 550-0016
 Material Things – 103 E. Van Buren | Woodstock, IL | (815) 575-9710
 Raue Center For The Arts – 26 N. Williams St | Crystal Lake, IL | (815) 356-9212



SUPPORT THE ARTS WITH ART!