

OCTOBER, 2026

Crystal Lake Camera Club

Serving Crystal Lake, IL and Surrounding Communities Since 1980



Drop #4

Color Image by Steve Hillmann

Shown at the September 8 Meeting
(See Steve's comments on Page 2)

EXPLORE THIS ISSUE

Images from the September 8 Meeting

October Presentation: Jim Pierce - Photo Editing

Club Outing: Stillman Nature Center, **October 11**

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IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

The images on this page and the cover are by Steve Hillmann.

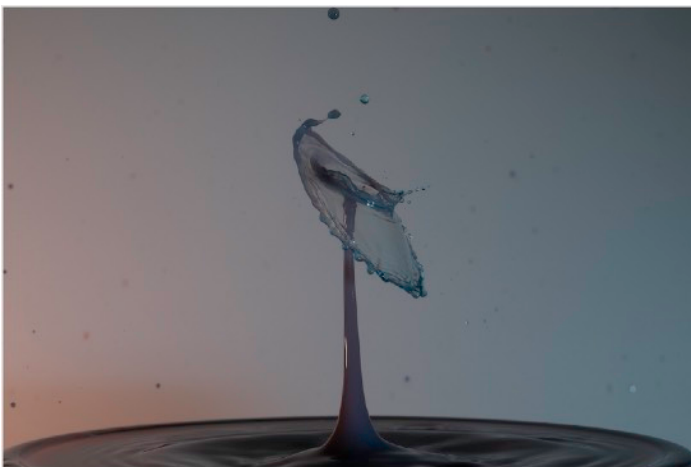
Steve said: “[Drop 1 & Drop 2] water drop pictures are simple and are from 2020. They were made by poking a hole in a plastic bag and tripping the shutter manually. [Drop 3 & Drop 4 (cover)] are from 2021 and 2026. They were made using a synchronized dropper, flash and shutter trigger. A “Before” photo is included for one of the drops as an example of the extensive post processing needed to create the final photo.”



Drop 1



Drop 2



Drop 3 (Before)



Drop 3 (After)

IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

The images on this page and the next are by Linda Hopp.

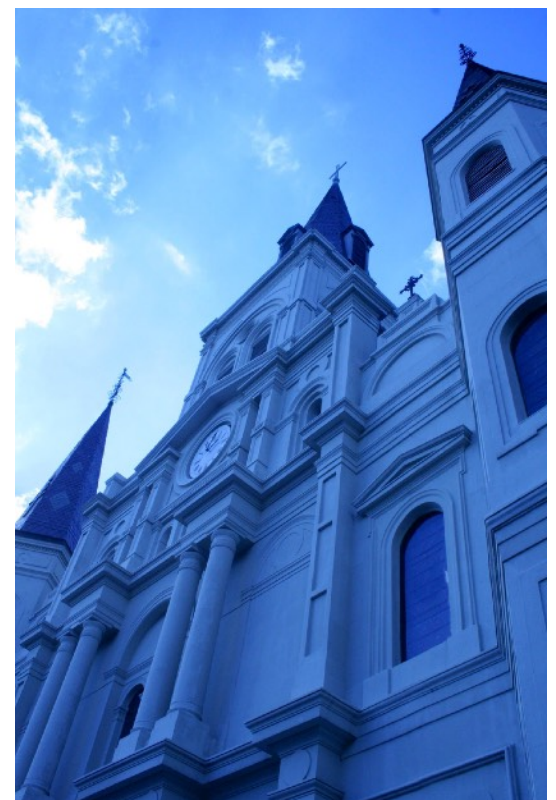
Linda said: "Since the "assignment" had been to show photos from years ago and discuss why they are different from photos you take now. This trip was a pivotal moment in time for me when I started looking at photography in more of an art sense instead of just documenting people (birthdays, etc) and places (basic vacation photos)."



Before

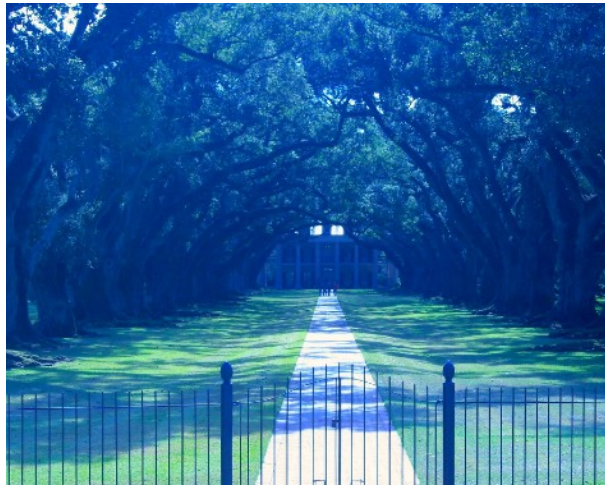


After



IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

The images on this page and the previous page are by Linda Hopp.



Correction from
The September Newsletter

*Editor's Note: In the September Newsletter, page 4, I unintentionally published a photo by Linda Hopp that was severely cropped from her original. I strive to be as honest to the photographer's intentions as possible, so here is Linda's original image, called **Reach for the Sky**.*

I regret my error.



IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

The images on this page are by Lynda Christopher.

Lynda said: *"Mount St. Helen: This was taken while hiking the trails around Mount St. Helen in the State of Washington. I took this in 2017. Taken with a Canon 5D Mark II. F-stop was 22. ISO 100. Unfortunately, it's not all in focus."*

Dog Days of Summer: This was taken while on a speed boat cruising around Lake Geneva in WI. This was taken with my iPhone in 2017.

Portrait of Bride & Groom: This was one of my favorite wedding photos. I took in 2016. Taken with a Canon 5D Mark II. F-stop 4. ISO 200. The subjects are in focus. The background blurred. This picture I downloaded right from my camera. (This was before I knew anything about photo editing.) It helps, though, to have beautiful subjects"



Mount St. Helen



Portrait of Bride & Groom



Dog Days of Summer

IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

The photos on this page are by Andrew Nelson.

Andrew said:

“The Avignon picture was an example of my very early digital photography. It was taken in August 2000 at Avignon France using a 0.3MP Sony digital camera providing only 640 x 480 resolution. With that resolution it looks a bit fuzzy, but it had some semblance of framing, although impaired by chopping off the top of the arch. Most of my digital pictures at that time were record shots of wife, kids, pets, events and travel locations taken on the fly.

Dogwood Canyon near Branson Missouri was taken in October 2023 at 16MP. It is a very scenic location. The photograph itself has natural leading lines, perhaps may have worked better flipped horizontally. It was captured without much pre-planning with the scenery doing most of the work.

Lake Windermere in Northern England was taken at sunset to get the golden light, has a foreground, leading lines and builds depth as you look further in. The location had been identified previously and a decision made to come back at sunset to get the light. This image has a cool palette of colors that works well as a framed image on my office wall.

The Abu Dhabi shot required a tripod, planning and a sequence of pictures to capture the light show as the sun set behind the clouds over the mosque. Over the years I suppose what I have learnt is that most of the really good pictures require knowledge of what to look for, and then a lot of preparation.



Avignon, FR



Dogwood Canyon, MO



Abu Dhabi, UAE



Lake Windermere, UK

IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING

The images on this page and the next are by Bill Batalden.

The comments are numbered to go with the image.

picture stories

1. My wife hugging a young grandson...he plays college football now!
2. A young granddaughter playing - she's now a junior in high school.
3. Annual Christmas outing to select & cut our Christmas tree from years ago. We still do it.
4. My attempt at an "artsy" photograph of a small pond behind our daughter's house on a rainy day, through a wet screen.
5. A grandson playing in a classical guitar recitalhow did you know that it was a classical guitar piece?
6. One of our granddaughters playing the viola in a high school recital. She also plays the harp & just graduated with a masters degree from Cornell University
7. One of my grandsons (the same one mentioned in #8) had caught this frog & wanted a picture.
8. Picture of my grandson & his wife toasting their 10th wedding anniversary.
9. The fruit plate was another attempt at an "artsy" picture. Oh well, so much for that!
10. The stream is an early attempt at leading lines.

These pictures helped me realize how fast kids grow up & how fast we grow older (not much though!).

1.



2.



3.



The images on this page and the previous page are by Bill Batalden.
See his comments on the previous page.

4.



5.



6.



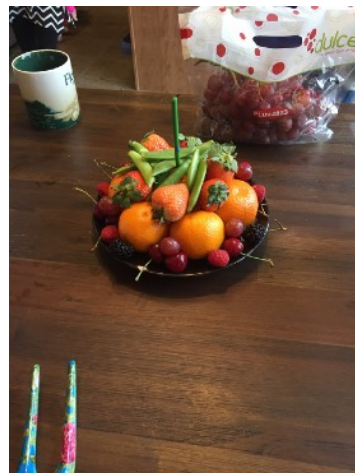
7.



8.



9.



10.



October 13 Presentation
JIM PIERCE – PHOTO EDITING

At the October 13 meeting, Jim Pierce (of Downtown Photo) will give a presentation on Photo Editing. He offers classes in this, and other photo related topics regularly, and you can be sure it will be a vibrant, idea-filled event. Check out his work on his website: cldowntownphoto.com.

We hope to see you on October 13 for this excellent presentation!

CLUB OUTING: STILLMAN NATURE CENTER, OCTOBER 11, 1-3PM

The Stillman Nature Center is a private, non-profit center for environmental education, located on 80 acres of woods, lake and prairie in South Barrington, Illinois. For our birders and wannabe birders, Stillman Nature Center has again reserved time for us to come and photograph the wild birds and flowers along their lovely trails, as well as getting out their special residents for us. These include injured owls, hawks, and a peregrine falcon, none of which can survive again in the wild. These raptors are now living at Stillman and are used in educational programs and public tours.

During our time there, they will have their birds available for photographs.

This event is free, though CLCC will make a donation to the center in appreciation.

You provide your own transportation (car pools?) Here's the location:

Stillman Nature Center
33 W Penny Road
South Barrington, IL 60010-9578

RSVP to Judy Jorgensen so we will know how many to expect.

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, October 31, 2026**, 8:30 AM at

Buttered Toast Restaurant, 2520 Bunker Hill Dr, Algonquin.

Next month's breakfast meeting will be November 28.

LANDSCAPE & NATURE SMALL GROUP

When: Third Wednesday each month, 7PM

Where: 711 Glacier Parkway, Algonquin

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 FUTURE OF CLCC

Notes from the August 11 Meeting ~

Submitted by Linda Christopher

At the September 8 meeting, there were 16 people present.

Thank you to all who submitted photos to Doug for our viewing and discussions.

Theme for the October 13 meeting: Architecture - Doors, windows, brickwork, whole buildings, cityscapes, countryside, construction, demolition, ruins - a wide open category. Submit 3-4 images to Doug Frey by Sunday, October 11.

Presentation at the October 13 meeting: Jim Pierce (of Downtown Photo) will give a presentation on photo editing. See more about this presentation on page 9.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a framed photo for the wall. We will help with that if necessary at the Wednesday small group meetings. When you give a framed photo to hang, please include a note with your name, the title of the photo (if there is one), and a short description (where it was taken, when, etc.). Give this information to Linda Hopp, and she will create a formal tag. Also make sure the photo has a wire on the back to hang it from.

These are the people who contributed images at the September 8 meeting for *Show & Tell* (S&T), *Before & After* (B&A) and *critique* (C):

- Andrew Nelson - four images from very diverse locations
- Bill Batalden - ten images of when his family was young
- Linda Hopp - twelve images from a trip to New Orleans ten years ago, with one B&A pair included
- Lynda Christopher - three images from several years ago
- Steve Hillmann - four water drop images, with one B&A pair included

Club Outing To Stillman Nature Center - Sunday, October 11, 1:00 - 3:00 PM (see page 9)

Discussions, discussions! - some topics from the meeting:

- **Then & Now:** 2 - 4 photos comparing your work in the past and your current efforts. How have you grown? How has your approach changed? What have you learned about photography - or yourself?
- Taking pictures of existing photographs, then editing them to clarify and enhance. Using AI can help.
- Art vs. pictures: What makes an image “art” as opposed to a “picture”?
- Places to show your photos:
 - 4th Friday (see page 12)
 - Aroma Coffee and Wine in Crystal Lake
 - 500px.com
- Print a banner with the club name to hang over the photo display in the meeting room.
- How to use AI will be discussed at the Wednesday meeting (see page 9)
- Microsoft Photos - free download for Windows users; great for editing; easy to use
- Google Gemini - use to edit images and create a “look” that you want

A REMINDER: **Show & Tell, Before & After, Then & Now** and **Critique** 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 11 for more information.

The Future of CLCC (continued)

Take a moment to contribute to the Facebook **Crystal Lake Camera Club Group Chat** page (see page 11).

The **Landscape and Nature Photography** small group is meeting regularly on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Doug Frey's home (see page 9).

Have an idea for an outing? If you have an idea for a photo outing and you want company, let Doug Frey know. Others in CLCC may want to join you!

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 (see page 9). The next breakfast meeting is Saturday, October 31 (🍊 BOO!).

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.

October 13	Jim Pierce (of <u>Downtown Photo</u>) - presentation on photo editing Theme for member submissions: Architecture
November 10	Theme for member submissions: Autumn Colors
December 8	Theme for member submissions: TBD

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

Following the theme is not required for submission to 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.

For Critique: submit 1-2 JPG images to Doug Frey (doug.frey@me.com) on the **Sunday before the meeting** date. These are images you present for group discussion and critique.

For Then & Now: submit 2-4 JPG images to Doug Frey (doug.frey@me.com) on the **Sunday before the meeting** date. These images comparing your work in the past and your current efforts. How have you grown? How has your approach changed? What have you learned about photography - or yourself?

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.



THE LAST OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW YOUR IMAGES UNTIL 2027!

4th FRIDAYS ART EVENT AT THE DOLE

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

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

This is the last 4th Friday Art Event until January 2027!

(Due to the holidays, they are not held in November & December.)

Submission Deadline: Sunday, October 11, 2026, by midnight

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

Cash Awards - \$450 total:

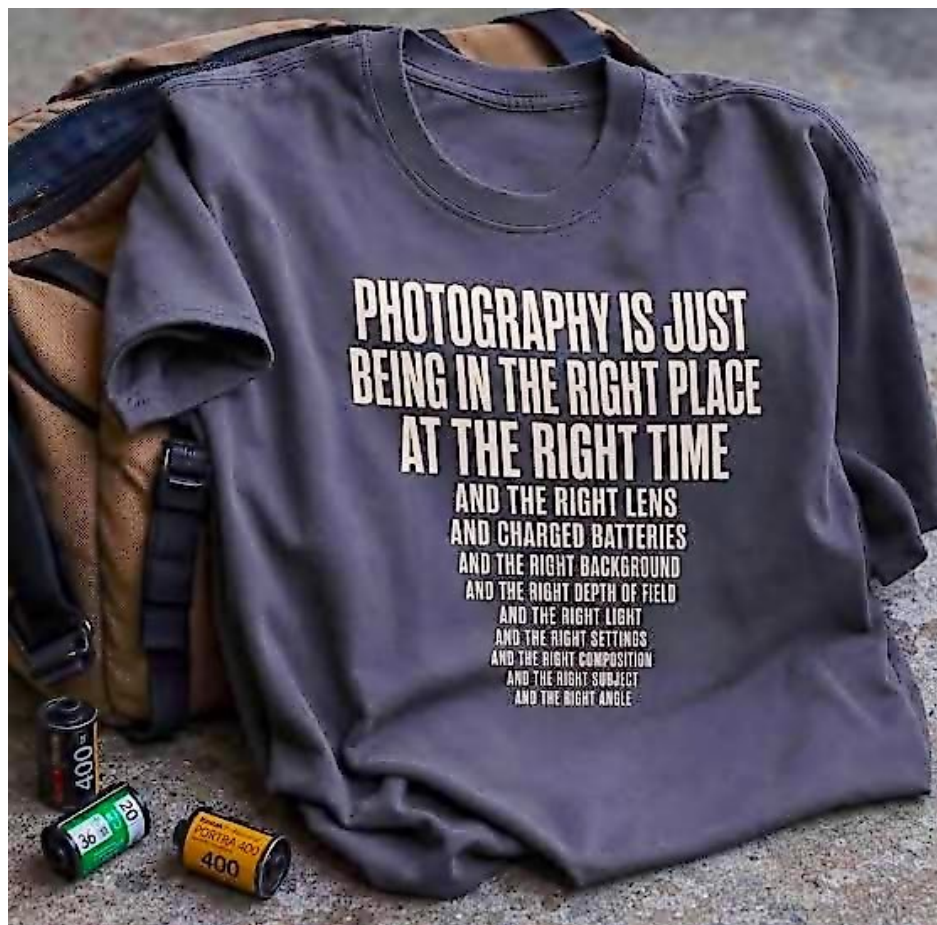
- 5 Honorable Mentions: \$50 cash each
- 4th Fridays Team Choice: \$50 cash each
- Kim Holz Memorial Award: \$50 cash
- Nancy Merkling Choice: \$50 cash
- People's Choice Award: \$50 cash



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.



CRYSTAL LAKE CAMERA CLUB OFFICERS

See The Club Directory For Contact Information

President	Judy Jorgensen
Secretary	Open
Treasurer	Gail Schulz
Board Member	Rich Bickham

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.

GALLERIES, STORIES, VIDEOS AND INSPIRATION ON THE WEB

iPhone 18 Pro & Duo: A Photographer's Reaction

Shared by Bill Tell - "Apple just announced the new iPhones. After watching only two reviews so far, this one is excellent. The professional-type camera features for a more serious photographer are very impressive."

The reason your face looks wrong in photos

Shared by Sandy Wittman - If you're anything like most of us, you've had this experience: You see a photo of yourself—maybe on a day you actually felt relatively put-together before leaving the house—and you suddenly feel betrayed by your own face. It's not you, it's physics.

Remembering Bill Biggart, the Photojournalist Who Ran Toward Danger on 9/11

Shared by Sandy Wittman - Among those who died on 9/11 was one photojournalist who was covering the terrorist attacks in New York City. His name was Bill Biggart. The photographer's still images show close-up scenes in lower Manhattan before the second tower collapsed, killing him. Rescue workers found Biggart's cameras, gear, press credentials and wedding ring. The cameras had nearly 300 images from that morning. Much of the film was damaged, but digital images from his Canon EOS D30 survived. What Biggart's cameras captured remains frozen in time 25 years later.

What I Learned From a Street Photography Master

Shared by Bill Tell - "Street is neat—but simply walking around with a camera and taking random pictures isn't anywhere close to the art of great street photography. We see far too much of that in photography videos today. This video takes a much deeper look at what it takes to elevate street photography to a master level, with wonderful examples that demonstrate the vision, timing, composition, and storytelling that truly makes street photograph exceptional. I would add starting out with a good background as a base is the first step. A fascinating and inspiring look at what street photography can become when it's treated with thoughtful mastery becoming an art form!"

The 2026 Audubon Photography Awards: Winners

Enjoy the winners of Audubon's annual photo awards—featuring stunning moments with birds across the hemisphere. Be inspired!

PACE Clouds Challenge: NASA Wants Your Pictures of the Sky - Here's How

NASA scientists working on the PACE satellite mission are asking for your help to collect Clouds observations when the PACE satellite is passing over your location. PACE Atmosphere lead, Dr. Andy Sayer, is interested in comparing your ground-based observations of clouds to PACE data to get a sense of how well PACE measures cloud edges and total cloud cover. Dr. Sayer is looking for GLOBE Clouds observations (a free app) taken within a 5-minute window of PACE passing overhead during the PACE Clouds Challenge (Sept. 15 - Nov. 1). For more details, visit the website.

FOUR POST PHOTOGRAPHERS RUSHED TO COVER 9/11. HERE'S WHAT THEY SAW.

Submitted by Sandy Wittman

(Editor's Note: The iconic photos discussed can be found online.)

By Ann Gerhart, published in the Washington Post on September 11, 2026

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/photography/2026/09/11/four-post-photographers-what-it-was-like-cover-911-attacks/>

Their photographs from the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are instantly recognizable, and still shocking, 25 years later.

What is harder to summon from this distance is the pulsating chaos of that day, hour by hour. The disbelief at billowing black smoke from a gash in the Pentagon and collapsing skyscrapers of steel, the dread over what attacks might yet come, the hope that people might be pulled from the rubble alive. No one knew the death toll that day; it grew to nearly 3,000. The wars after killed millions.

We asked four photographers for The Washington Post what it was like to cover the attacks that day and the next: where they were before the planes hit and how they did their work, what they felt then and how they reflect on it now. They were first responders to the first draft of history. All rushed to the scene while others rushed away, because that was their job.

Their memories, and their photographs, are below.

Yoni Brook, World Trade Center

Yoni Brook was a 19-year-old sophomore at New York University, in his second week back at school. On his way to class, he saw a crowd looking up at smoke coming from one of the twin towers. Someone said a small plane had hit it. He assumed it was an accident and went to class.

“When I emerged at 10:30 a.m., I looked back downtown and the towers were gone. It was just a huge plume of smoke.

“Someone in the crowd said a second plane had hit. I sprinted a few blocks to my dorm room. My roommate told me The Washington Post had called our landline asking for me.”

Brook had spent a summer after high school working in The Post's photo department, and now the paper had an assignment. He grabbed his camera and 20 rolls of film.

“I started to walk, going in the opposite direction of thousands of people streaming away from Lower Manhattan. I found my way to the wreckage. It was surprisingly devoid of people, with a stunned silence everywhere. The massive response hadn't mobilized yet. I saw an EMT looking through a smashed ambulance for extra supplies. We walked on the tower's steel girders, now a pile of smoking wreckage, looking for any signs of life.

“The firefighters weren't finding people alive.”

That night, after sending off some negatives he had dropped off at a one-hour photo store and scanned at the student newspaper, Brook went back.

“I remember walking downtown through Lower Manhattan, trying to avoid the police cordon which had sealed the site. I spent the night trying to avoid getting in anyone's way, hiding in the World Financial Center overlooking the pile. The windows were shattered, which made it easier to photograph from. I saw heavy equipment trying to pull the beams off the pile. When the sun came up, it illuminated the smoke, shards of the steel and the people sifting through it. I remember being struck by its horrible beauty.”

Four Post Photographers (continued)

“I’m still in touch with some of the firefighters I met the morning of September 11, including Michael Sauer, who I photographed drinking from a fire hydrant. Mike and I have a ritual where we call or text each other on 9/11.”

“I feel grateful that I was able to contribute to the visual record of the day. In my career today as a documentary filmmaker, I often revisit the lessons from this period. I think about how to document tragedy with proximity and sensitivity. How to share reality, even when it’s horrible, while keeping the humanity of the people caught in the middle of it.”

Michael Lutzky, the Pentagon

The Post deployed several staff photographers to the Pentagon that Tuesday morning and for days after. Lutzky, a Post photographer from 1998 to 2004, was one of them. (Other staff photographers went into Manhattan as soon as police reopened the bridges and tunnels. The site in rural Pennsylvania where a fourth plane crashed was heavily restricted for weeks.)

“My shift was later in the day. It was a lovely day, and so the morning was to be coffee and newspaper with a dog walk thrown in.” Then he saw the news.

As it reported on the World Trade Center attack, “the ‘Today’ show cut to its Pentagon correspondent to report on any suspected links to terrorism. During his live shot, he paused, his expression changed, and he said that he just felt the building shake. I grabbed my gear and raced out of the house.”

“When we need to, photographers are high-powered human GPS systems before we had Waze and map apps. Out in the city every day for years gives you an intuition about traffic flows and side streets — medians and alleys that can get you to a scene quickly. There is a force that kicks in gear when there is a news event and you are not yet there.

“I got to the Pentagon and went to work.

“That community of active military, veterans and national security officers don’t hesitate. Action, orders, information was flying. Medics and volunteers running toward the building in waves — only to be turned back at times as planes flew overhead.”

He managed to get to the parking lot adjacent to the impact.

“I may have stood in that same spot for five hours. It was a helpless feeling. There was nothing I could easily see or access. Nothing I could contribute and little to report on. But I knew that I needed to remain. Just in case something happened. Just in case I am the only one still close enough to witness.

“What stays with me, when I choose to let it surface, is the mass helplessness.”

Juana Arias, the Pentagon

When traffic stopped completely, Arias, a Post photographer from 1992 to 2005, abandoned her car on the road and ran toward the site. “I could see smoke billowing out of the Pentagon. In the distance, I could see people pouring out of the building and running.

“I kept walking and soon found myself in the middle of a triage area on the opposite side of the impact. Dozens of people were being treated. Some were sitting on the ground in a daze; others were walking around looking confused. Some had burns covering their bodies; others had broken bones, with slings and braces supporting their necks, arms and legs. Some struggled to breathe well.

Four Post Photographers (continued)

“I could see and feel the fear and pain of the people around me, and I tried to capture that in my images. I had covered wars, disasters and terrible events in Central America and all over the world before that day. I had seen its consequences and documented its victims. However, after each of those assignments, I always came back home to a safe place. This time was different.”

John McDonnell, the Pentagon

“On the morning of 9/12 I was assigned to do an afternoon shift at the media outpost that was set up at a gas station on the other side of Washington Boulevard, about a half-mile from the crash site. I was lucky being a sports photographer that The Post issued me a 400 mm 2.8 lens. This, combined with a 2x teleconverter, made the lens a 800mm. When you combine that with the digital camera I was using, it had what was known as a crop sensor that added another 0.5 magnification, giving me the equivalent of a 1200mm super telephoto lens.”

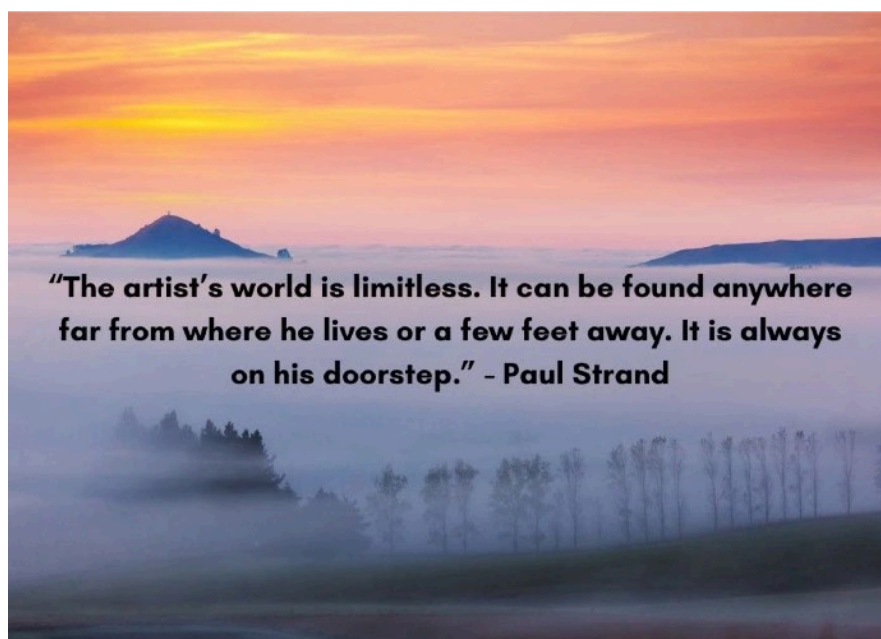
McDonnell, who joined The Post in 1978 and retired in 2023, had been in San Diego the previous weekend covering the Washington football team and had FedExed that lens back home.

“The fire had already been extinguished by the time I arrived, but you could still smell some smoke in the air. I set up with my big lens on the stepladder; I had a pretty clear view of everything and could see the giant gash in the west wall of the Pentagon that the plane had made.

“About a half-hour after I set up, I noticed a group of men on the roof; they were examining the area where they would hang the flag. Soon after ... soldiers and firefighters brought the large American flag out on the roof, and brought it to the edge to secure it and dropped it over the side, I photographed it with the super telephoto lens.

“What sticks with me is having the ash from the Pentagon fall on me. The many Army stretchers stacked along the wall. Going to Arlington Hospital and seeing all the staff in scrubs in an all-hands-on-deck disaster. I kept thinking that hospitals always drill for a mass-casualty event, and I was seeing that being played out for real. The sound of an F-16 fighter jet flying around high overhead, in a bright blue sky, still sticks with me.”

Olivier Laurent contributed to this report.



VIDEO: I LOVE FILM BY THORSTEN OVERGAARD

Submitted by Bill Tell

This video is one of the most comprehensive and clearly presented explanations of shooting 35mm film that I have seen.

My personal choice is a fully mechanical Leica M-series rangefinder camera manufactured between 1954 and 1984. One of the great advantages of these cameras is their independence from electronics, which can and will eventually fail and become impossible to repair when replacement components are no longer available. With proper care and occasional servicing (CLA) a mechanical Leica could still be producing beautiful photographs a hundred years from now while still be very valuable.

I photographed with film for many years, long before digital photography became available and the norm. Waiting several days for my personal choice slides (positives) or prints from negatives to return was simply part of the experience. In fact, that wait created a wonderful sense of anticipation and excitement when the finished photographs finally arrived.

Another significant advantage of color film is its distinctive color rendition. Each film stock has its own characteristic palette, contrast and tonal qualities. Choosing the right film allows the photographer to achieve beautiful colors straight from the lab, often with little or no post-processing.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure of shooting film is how it slows down the entire photographic process. With a limited number of exposures and no instant image review, the photographer becomes more thoughtful and deliberate about composition, lighting and exposure. Rather than taking dozens of photographs and selecting the best afterward, each frame becomes a conscious artistic decision.

For those willing to embrace this more deliberate approach, film photography offers a remarkably rewarding experience. It reconnects us with the fundamentals of photography and brings back much of the anticipation, craftsmanship and satisfaction that made photography so enjoyable in the first place.

I hope you have the opportunity to discover and enjoy this wonderful experience for yourself.

~Bill



CITY METHODIST CHURCH IN GARY, INDIANA

Submitted by Sandy Wittman

Many photographers in the Chicago area photographed the ruins of the City Methodist Church in Gary, Indiana. My late husband, Norm Kopp, and I photographed it in the spring of 2015. It was a little tricky and probably really dangerous to get inside, but it was a wonderful place to photograph. I am sad that they have not been able to save any part of the building. I hope they saved the stained glass that remained.

This is the photograph that I took that day.



Here is the article from the September 5, 2026 Chicago Sun-Times:

Once the largest Methodist church in the Midwest is slated for demolition

By Abby Miller

September 5, 2026

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/real-estate/2026/09/05/city-methodist-church-largest-midwest-gary-demolition>

City Methodist Church closed in 1975, and since then, the Gothic Revival-style building has eluded redevelopment over the years.

The long-vacant and decaying City Methodist Church — at one time the largest Methodist church in the Midwest — is slated for demolition, more than 50 years after it closed.

The wrecking ball comes after a number of unsuccessful attempts to save the historic church in Gary, Indiana. In 2018, city officials worked with Chicago-based architecture firm Bailey Edward on a redevelopment plan for the site, which spurred the idea for an open-air ruins that made use of the church's structure.

City Methodist Church (continued)

Gary and the University of Notre Dame's Housing and Community Regeneration Initiative then came up with a vision in 2025 to use the church's bell tower for a proposed City Renaissance Park — part of a larger strategic plan to revive Downtown Gary. In January, the city's redevelopment commission approved spending \$112,500 to work with Bailey Edward on a plan for stabilizing the bell tower and cathedral so it could be incorporated into the new park.

But because a funding partner was never found for the \$4.2 million stabilization effort Gary leaders decided to demolish the property, according to Steve Segura, chief communications officer for the city of Gary.

The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority solicited bids for the church's demolition earlier this year. During its monthly board of directors meeting on Wednesday, the agency awarded the contract to Homrich Wrecking, who estimated demolition costs at \$5.3 million.

Demolition will begin after the contract is finalized, according to David Wellman, Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority's communications director.

Segura said the church had been deemed unsafe and unrecoverable so Gary Mayor Eddie Melton needed to address the safety concerns after a funding partner was never found. The church, 577 Washington St., is located near the 21st Century Academy charter school and Genesis Towers, which opened as Hotel Gary in 1926 and converted into senior housing in the 70s.

"Ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and some of the community's most vulnerable residents in the immediate vicinity had to become the City's foremost responsibility," Segura said in a statement.

Steel roots

Immigrants and migrants came to Gary in the 1900s, as the city boomed with steel mills.

As the population swelled, Rev. William G. Seaman founded the church in 1926, according to the Indiana Historical Bureau. U.S. Steel helped fund the church's construction with \$350,000, equivalent to about \$6 million in 2026.

The church was open everyday and was a central meeting place in Gary. It included a gym, theater, music studio, cafeteria and commercial space. The congregation was segregated, though it offered programs to Black residents and immigrants.

When the city saw an influx of Black residents and immigrants in the 1950s, some City Methodist leaders tried to integrate the church. But its white congregation largely opposed the move, according to the bureau. And by the 1960s — when Gary's white residents fled to the suburbs — the church's population started to shrink. Efforts to build relationships with the community came too late.



Rev. William G. Seaman founded City Methodist Church in 1926.
Anthony Vazquez/Sun-Times

City Methodist Church (continued)

“City Church leaders considered merging with a local Black church, but when community interviews revealed that minority groups did not trust the church, leaders decided to close in 1975,” according to the bureau.

Lauren Pacheco, artist and board member of Landmark Illinois, said the church has been “taken by the elements” over the years, but the building is still striking with its intricate limestone work and terra cotta detailing.

“It’s hard not to look at the building and get sort of drawn into a story of what history might have been like, or what life would have been like walking the halls in that building,” Pacheco said. “The Gothic Revival architecture and the sheer scale of it reflected what enormous confidence and ambition the city of Gary [had] at that moment. In that moment, it wasn’t just a sanctuary. It really became and functioned as a broader community and civic institution.”

She said the church’s demolition should be treated as a “significant moment” to think about Gary’s future.

It’s not the only property slated for demolition. The Genesis Convention Center, which played host to Whitney Houston and Prince, will be torn down and the site redeveloped. This follows the demolition of other historic properties like the Gary Water Tower and Gary Memorial Auditorium in 2020.

Pacheco, who has lived in Gary for nine years, hopes city officials consider saving materials from City Methodist for a sculpture or similar display. The site could become a spot for open-air painting or photography, she said, since previous plans to create a ruins garden were dropped.

The city didn’t respond when asked if it was — or plans to be — in conversation with local groups about the future of the site.

Pacheco said it’s not always possible for every historical site to be saved. And in a city like Gary that has seen decades of economic decline, she argues it’s important to not become a museum of the past. If the City Methodist site becomes another hub for civic and community engagement, it could help contribute to Gary’s progress.

“It could be a lovely way to engage residents to create a new sort of civic space — something that the City Methodist was celebrated for,” Pacheco said. “This site, although taking a different shape, could mean something really special.”



City Methodist Church in Gary, Indiana, closed in 1975.
Anthony Vazquez/Sun-Times

VIDEO – IS APPLE PHOTOS REALLY BETTER THAN ADOBE PHOTOSHOP?

Submitted by Bill Tell

The new iOS 27 brings generative AI directly to the iPhone 18 Pro, something earlier iPhones, e.g., iPhone 17 simply don't have the processing power to handle.

I tested it on my new iPhone 18 Pro Max, and the results are crazy good. The old "Remove" tools before generative AI were useful, but the results were often just okay.

This is a completely different level. In many cases, it's now amazingly good—and much easier to use than Photoshop for cleaning up and removing unwanted elements from photos, as you'll see in the video.



VIDEO – CHAT GPT AND PHOTO EDITING

Submitted by Bill Tell

Did GPT just outdo Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop—at least in many respects? Perhaps. And if that's the case, Adobe should be paying very close attention.

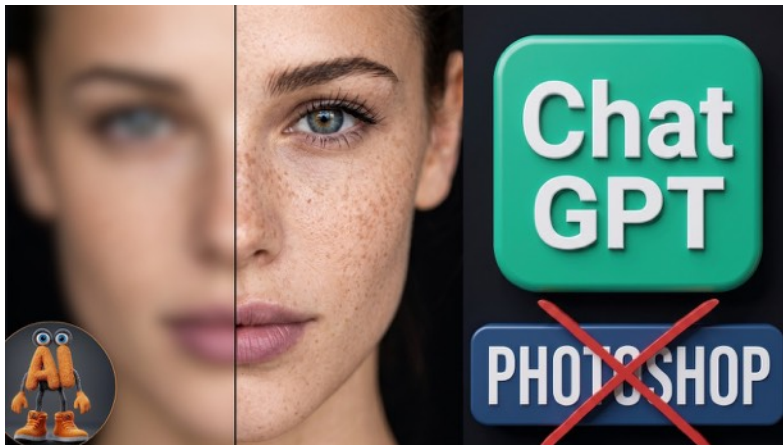
But let's wait another year and ask the same question. If GPT continues advancing at this pace, the answer may be a lot harder for Adobe to dismiss.

GPT (as in ChatGPT), it stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer.

Generative — it generates text and other content.

Pre-trained — it learns from large amounts of data before being used.

Transformer — the type of neural-network architecture it uses.



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.

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.*"

*Helpful Resources (continued)***What Makes Great Photos Great**

Shared by Bill Tell - *"This video is very good at explaining what makes a photo great as opposed to a snapshot. A snapshot can be technically very good but a great photo conveys emotion that makes one like to look at it."*

Best L-Bracket Showdown!

Shared by Bill Tell - *"Some photographers have asked me about the L-bracket for attachment of the camera to an Arca Swiss quick release system. This video demonstrates differences between brands of brackets. I highly recommend using an L-bracket if one expects to use a tripod."*

20 Tips for Starting Out in Street Photography

Shared by Doug Frey - *"Great article to help get started in street photography. Concise and clear ideas with excellent photo examples."*

Photography Courses Available at the Chicago Botanic Garden through November

Shared by Bill Tell - <https://www.chicagobotanic.org/learning/adult-classes/photography>

Camera Repair: Chicago Camera Specialists, 5 So. Wabash St., Suite 1017, Chicago, Illinois 60603

Phone: 312-332-5538, <https://www.chicagocameraspecialists.com/>

Shared by Russ King: *"He's only open M, W, F 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. [The owner] is desperate to sell the business, since he's clearly much beyond retirement age, but he cannot find anybody to take over and he feels guilty leaving all his loyal customers in the lurch. But he does a great job, at least on my Nikon, and he's very reasonably priced. Use him, or lose him, I say."*

Crossing Worlds | Jason Siegel & The SL3

https://youtu.be/NzGgvm_2vk4?si=ronBOvn4Ci2LX_ps

Shared by Bill Tell: *"I love street shooting, but to me the best street shooting is telling a story about a subject as this video explains." Photographer Jason Siegel explores the versatility of the creative process by blending diverse subjects, formats, and editing techniques. By capturing moments across various environments, Siegel demonstrates how combining different perspectives can tell a cohesive story and keep artistry evolving through continuous exploration of new techniques."*

500px.com

Submit your best photos - as members of the community view and comment, your images will rise to the top, and be posted on the landing page. There are "Quests" - image competitions with cash prizes. You can also use this site for commercial licensing.

unsplash.com

A free photography community for sharing images with the world. Post images, or download your favorites. They have an annual Unsplash Awards in ten categories with cash and merchandise awards. Submissions are taken in October each year.

Open House Chicago

Submitted by Steve Szalaj

Every October, the Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) hosts **Open House Chicago** - a free public festival that provides rare behind-the-scenes access to sites of architectural, historical and cultural significance.

Open House Chicago (OHC) is one of the largest events of its kind in the world. This year's **in-person site visits occur on October 17 - 18**, with extended programming and city-wide self-guided tours available for the entire month of October.

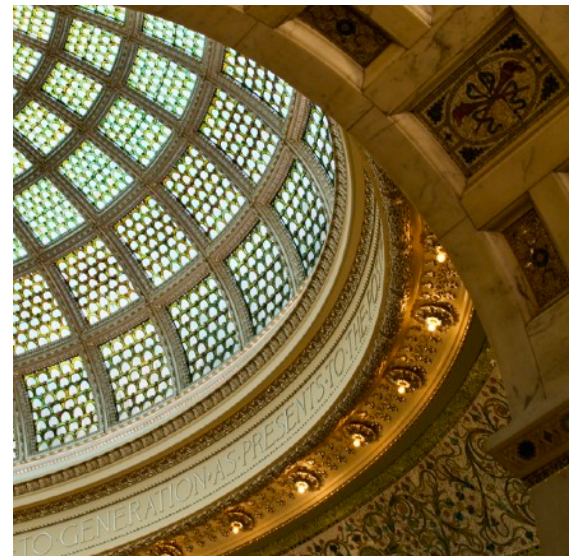


This year's program highlights more than 20 Chicago neighborhoods, North Shore suburbs and Oak Park, with self-guided tours, outdoor exploration on themes including community engagement, green spaces, historic preservation, residential architecture and more.



When you participate in the in-person site visits on October 18-19, there are CAC docents and volunteers to guide you into most places. Some sites are places that are not usually open to the public, such as the Cliff Dwellers Club, which offers spectacular views of Lake Michigan and Millennium Park. Other sites, that usually require an entrance fee, have free access. It is a great way to get unusual views of the city, its architecture and stunning, rarely seen spaces.

For more information see the [**Open House Chicago web site**](#). Right now, you can enjoy archives of OHC since 2015. Here is the page on Chicago's tourism site: [**Choose Chicago**](#).



There is an app to help guide your explorations. Chicago Architecture Center members get exclusive access and perks.

This is a wonderful way to see Chicago.