



# *Tips for Club Photography*

❧ *Cathy Oneglia* ❧

ZONE II  
OCTOBER 12, 2023



## **GCA Zone II Club Photography Chairs**

Attending a workshop in Maine this past June with professional photographer Eddie Soloway, I met several photography club chairs from other GCA zones. They were emphatic in saying that the best job in the GCA is club photography chair, although that was qualified to “co-chair” by a few of the attendees. It was an enthusiastic photography group and we came away with several ideas for our clubs. We had opportunities to share experience, questions, observations and concerns.

I return again and again to the basic idea that GCA club photography should be fun and educational. Our clubs should support the mission of the GCA with relevant photography of the natural world that communicates the joy of the art and challenges us to broaden our skills and technical expertise.

- 1.** As soon as practical in the beginning of a new annual cycle, gather your members for a brain storm and decide what you would like to accomplish as a group. What would be fun? Many clubs host bench shows and sweepstakes frequently. These are not governed by specific GCA rules and can be designed by the individual club. They need not be judged and can even be just a show of members’ photos that of “What I Did This Summer.” That would be an inclusive way to encourage participation.
- 2.** Perhaps partnering with another of your club’s committees is a good way to share in club experience and build an institutional memory bank; for instance, if your conservation committee is planting daffodil bulbs with the 6th grade to give as Mother’s Day presents, send photographers to school to that workshop; if your projects committee is planting trees and shrubs at the new playground, document the whole process.
- 3.** If your club holds competitive judged bench shows and sweepstakes, set up the calendar at this first meeting and decide on themes for the shows that complement club programs. If your speaker is a famous flower designer, for instance, hold a workshop for taking pictures of flower shows and designs and then practice on club members’ arrangements, then enter these in a sweepstakes class. The GCA webpage, photography committee landing page is full of TIPS FOR PLANNING A CLUB PHOTO SHOW.
- 4.** Field trips are enormously popular. Decide on some trips to places that your members wish to photograph and go at the peak of the season for what they offer. Right now at Florence Griswold Museum, there is a huge show of Fairy Forts and Houses. Your group would come away with an array of different takes on the theme. Build your field trip around a workshop. Bring a local professional photographer to a local popular and notable site or, especially, a beautiful garden in its prime season. Your group will learn a tremendous amount from this person. If you do not have a large budget, it is now quite common to split the fee for the photographer among the attendees. Below is an example of a Sweepstakes that incorporate field trips.



## **IT'S TIME....TO SPREAD OUR WINGS**

**Autumn Bench Show and Sweepstakes  
October 26, 2023**

As we approach this most glorious fall season, take every opportunity to photograph our natural beauty, our trees and forests, our birds. In addition, keep an eye out to notice what we have in the natural world around us that is perhaps in jeopardy or is threatened, that may or may not be in the process of care or remediation. The photography committee salutes the Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy for its constant effort to protect and offer sanctuary to the avian species. We salute the White Memorial Foundation for maintaining 40 miles of trails that cover various habitats. It is the state's largest nature center and wildlife sanctuary. We salute the environmental education that is offered in our schools.

**CLASS I:** A Landscape of an environmentally sensitive subject. Write a few words, 25 or less, as a statement of intent.

**CLASS II:** A Tree in autumn splendor. Write a few words, 25 or less, as a statement of intent.

**CLASS III:** A Bird or Birds. Write a few words, 25 or less, as a statement of intent.

Flush mount your photography on black foam core or mat board. This may be done professionally. It should measure between 36 and 50 inches in circumference. Plant material is required. The GCA Photography Division Entry Card should be used. It can be found on the LGC website on the photography committee page. Please, if you have questions or difficulties with any of these requirements contact me at [coneglia@gmail.com](mailto:coneglia@gmail.com) or 860 921-7280.

For Class I, The Photography Committee met at the O&G Southbury Quarry for a photo op and tour of the quarry in operation, including current process and activity, views of remediated and reforested areas, a solar farm on a quarried site and a presentation on the geology, history, and “what goes on around here” of the quarry. We clicked away!

For Class III, Litchfield Garden Club’s photography committee joined with all of our club members for our August meeting, a “Tour and Tea” at The Ripley Waterfowl Sanctuary to learn about the rare birds, spend time outdoors, practice our skills and enjoy a lovely tea with thanks to our hospitality committee.

**5.** An unusual theme for a Sweepstakes will arouse curiosity and encourage members to participate. I suggest a workshop on night photography. Meet during the workshop or after, at a good location for watching the full moon rise, accompanied with bottles of wine and lots of snacks. It will produce a myriad of varied and wonderful photos to be displayed either at a future bench show or a sweepstakes. This builds camaraderie and participation. Our group met on a high ridge with a pond and sweeping rural view. Waited patiently and then the clouds got in our way. The wine bottles were empty very soon afterwards and we learned that patience is the photographer’s best friend. Most of the attendees brought only an iPhone.

These are useful links for iPhone use for a moonlight field trip:

<https://www.nightcapcamera.com/photograph-the-moon-on-your-iphone-with-night-cap-camera/>

<https://www.iphone-fotograaf.nl/en/how-to-shoot-the-moon-with-your-iphone/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6mmGJPkH7s>





In September at our Annual Zone II meeting in Greenwich, I was asked to say a few words about the Role of Photography in Zone II of the GCA. Greenfingers Garden Club did a marvelous job of welcoming us, educating us about Greenwich, taking us to the Bruce Museum, hiking on Greenwich Point Park, presenting annual awards. Zone reps of every committee report for the year, as well as the Presidents. It was my pleasure to speak on behalf of all the club photography chairs.

## **The Role of Photography in Zone II of the Garden Club of America**

As Photography is a national committee within the GCA, its role is to support, enhance and further the mission of the GCA. The mission is simply stated, "Bringing clubs together to cultivate the bond among people, plants, and the environment." Photography is the perfect medium for communicating subject matter that contributes to building community within our natural world and to sustaining that world. There is the opportunity thru photography to communicate our love of gardening, regard for our fellow citizens and desire to protect the environment and to publicize our work in our communities.

Each Zone has a Photography Rep whose duty is to assist club chairs in the effort to educate about the art of photography and communicate the art through flower shows, bench shows and community projects. We offer a forum for display of our members' art. We plan field trips and workshops that enhance our knowledge and we share that knowledge.

Your Zone Rep communicates GCA Photography news to the club chairs for dissemination to members. We work with the Reps of other zones to present a cohesive photography experience throughout all GCA clubs. We are ready to help club chairs navigate the GCA Photography landing page, as it is full of information, opportunity for learning and news of photographers in all the GCA clubs.

It is said that through Photography we learn to really see and not just look at things. The goal is to capture through the lens the essence of the natural world and to evoke an emotional response in the viewer; for instance in advocacy photography we might show significant harm done to our earth in the name of progress. We might show too how that is remediated and ameliorated. Our field trip this fall will be to photograph a Pozzotive Plant in Beacon Falls that takes recycled glass and makes a product that is used in making cement for concrete. Then closer to our Rhode Island and eastern Ct. clubs, we will visit a quarry in Rhode Island to practice some environmental photography skills. All club chairs are welcome to come on both field trips.

We are planning two workshops, one a Montage and Collage event on October 6 at the Farmington Library and one at Weir Farm in May.

I will be reaching out personally to my Zone II club photography chairs. I hope it is a fun and rewarding year for all.

## **Photography Report Zone II GCA National Photography Committee Meeting October 4-5, 2023**

It is my pleasure to report to you that I have news from five of the nineteen garden clubs in Zone II. First, The Litchfield Garden Club and Washington Garden Club were invited to photograph and tour the O&G Southbury Quarry with TJ Oneglia presenting the history, purpose and geology of the rock quarry. He expounded on the ways in which there is constant remediation and amelioration of the land after quarrying is completed. On a former rock cut, there is now a solar farm providing energy that runs the entire quarry and sends power to the grid. There is constant planting of new forest on tiers of quarried rock cuts that prevents erosion, adds oxygen to the environment and adds the beauty of trees to the landscape. This field trip highlights the GCA mission to care for the environment.

The Ridgefield Garden Club photography committee, under the leadership of Heidi Riggs and Liz Montanari, is consistently active. They mounted an "Impressions of Weir" photo show that hung in the Ridgefield Town Hall from mid-March through Memorial Weekend. Seventeen members participated in five different classes. In anticipation of a Fall '24 photo show: Seasonal Images of Ballard Gardens, they are offering club members 4 workshops between September and April. Each is designed to hone a skill. As an added bonus, a few rotating RGC members work with a class of 4-5 year olds at a local nursery school two times a year. We have "covered" floral design and native plants. This year's RGC fall activity is having them take iPhone photos in Ballard Gardens, which we will include in our show next fall. Since its inception in 1914, the RGC has hosted monthly Sweepstakes/bench shows. They are currently trying something new — combining Photography with Floral Design into a virtual photo show. The "classes" are five different meals or parts of a meal: charcuterie board, appetizer, soup, nicoise salad and dessert. Participants are to submit a recipe and a photo of their table setting with a floral arrangement. There seems to be real enthusiasm.

The Fairfield Garden Club reports that Co-Chair Ann Franzen conducted a Photo Prep workshop for the Sasqua Garden Club and Fairfield Garden Club in preparation for entering the Photography Division of the GCA Annual Meeting, April 2024. She covered resizing, renaming and finalizing a jpeg for a juried show. The club's September membership meeting will host a bench show, "Celebrate Summer's Bounty", photography for display only to encourage participation. This non-judged photography show was very successful last year and a nice welcome back for their first meeting.

The Garden Club of Hartford will host a workshop in October to create a Photo Montage from members own photo libraries, presented by member Betty Standish. Photography Chair, Mara Sfara, is working on a club photography show to be hung at the Blake Hotel in December. In November, she is organizing a joint workshop with the Litchfield Garden Club with presenter Jude Amsel, mixed media artist. Participants will



learn to create textures and stencils on the gel press, photo image transfers and how to incorporate the gel printing plate in art journaling and mixed media techniques.

For Zone II Club Photography Chairs, I am planning a photo shoot and tour of the O&G facility in Beacon Falls, CT, where the Urban Mining Pozzotive plant is located. Pozzolans are created from recycled glass to replace up to 50% of the cement in concrete. As a green product, it is important to both do something good for the environment by using recycled glass productively and to improve the production of concrete since traditional components are becoming scarce and expensive. I am also planning a field trip to the Rawson Quarry in Westerly, RI, a more convenient location for our eastern CT and RI clubs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine Oneglia

## **Photography Itself - What Makes a Good Photograph**

The number one question that club photography chairs hear most often from their committee members is “What makes a photograph truly great?” Following are tips from The Clark Interview with photography Alan Rokach. He says, “There are elements that make a photo truly great, though few photographs have them all: 1) an emotional connection to the viewer; 2) a dynamic composition; 3) interesting light; 4) a unique point of view; 5) the decisive moment; and 6) humor. “

Each of these six elements provides club chairs with a place to project, to take off with your members. Hold some committee meetings dedicated to the exploration of these elements. Do research and watch interviews with professional photographers. Then use your screen share capability on your phone or lap top when meeting with your group. Discuss what you see, hear and learn from these photographers. A wonderful resource for this kind of meeting is the GCA Photography Landing Page where you will find the entire video collection of several years of the Annual Virtual Photography Conference, held each January.

1. Go to [gcamerica.org](http://gcamerica.org)
2. click on members area
3. click on gca committee pages, scroll down to photography — click
4. click on 2023 Photography Conference. All of the presentations and projects are visible there in their entirety, including the THE COVID PROJECT video. As club photography chair, please be sure that each member of your club views the Covid Project Slide Show. The photos truly showcase all the elements listed above and mentioned by Alan Rokach as to what makes great photography. This project is a priceless contribution to the institutional memory of the Garden Club of America.

## **What to say to club photography committee members to help them gain confidence**

1. Think for yourself: Don't let fancy gadgets think for you.
2. Less is more: Include only what is necessary in each frame; eliminate anything else.
3. Light is everything: use every kind of light to its best advantage.
4. Be objective; the camera sees everything. Train your eye to do the same.
5. Imagine before you shoot: The picture your camera takes can only be as good as the picture your mind creates.
6. Make it simple: As a photographer your task is to make order out of chaos.
7. Beauty is made, not found: Ordinary objects seen by a sensitive eye are transformed into extraordinary images.
8. Master your equipment: Understand your gear so that it serves the intentions of your eyes and mind.
9. Never say "done": There is always one more way to shoot the picture.
10. Express yourself: The joy of photography comes from the ability to project a unique vision that you can share with others.

### **TIPS FOR PLANNING A CLUB PHOTO SHOW From The Yellow Book**

**When you read the tips below, the most important thing to remember is that planning ahead will produce tremendous benefits.**

A club photography show is a wonderful way to engage all members of your club. Now that almost everyone is carrying a phone that also takes photos, increasingly greater numbers of people are discovering how much fun it is to use a camera. For many people a smartphone is the first camera they have ever owned. While a smartphone may ultimately be limited in what kinds of images it can capture, it can certainly open the door to the exciting and creative world of photography . . . and that's the goal of the GCA. Others in your club may be ardent photographers who have had limited opportunity to share their work.

- Start by speaking with your Club President, Floral Design and Club Competition Chairs and identify a date for a club photography show.
- Schedule the show out far enough in advance that your members will have plenty of time to take lots of photographs.
- Write a Class Schedule. Review the GCA Yellow Book with consideration for Individual Class Descriptions under the Photography section. Re-



member that class titles should reflect the theme. Try to limit each class description to one or two words. Allow the photographer to interpret the class. Class descriptions that are lengthy or that try to define themselves are more confusing than helpful.

- The class schedule must specify how the photo is to be mounted or matted. For example, state that photos must be “mounted on black foam core and may not be overmatted.”
- Class schedules must specify the overall dimensions for entries. It is preferable to state a minimum /maximum perimeter size and allow the photographer to select the best orientation and size for their own image. As a general rule of thumb, the overall dimension of an entry should be “a minimum of 36” and “not to exceed 50” in total perimeter measurement. There are exceptions, for example a class which specifies miniature photos, perhaps 3”x 3”. This can be very effective. Always consider the class title and which requirements best support the class.
- Specify a NOVICE class to encourage the participation of members who are just beginning to try their hand at photography.
- Specify if the class is to be COLOR, MONOCHROME, MACRO or CREATIVE techniques. These classes are to be separate. Include the Yellow Book definition of a monochrome, black and white, macro, or creative techniques if they are part of the schedule.
- Allow your club time to offer one or two workshops to assist members in taking, selecting, and critiquing their photos. You might all agree to meet at a local arboretum or take a garden or historical walking tour.
- You can even meet in the backyard of a fellow member with a lovely garden. Agree that you will all shoot photos to include in one of the upcoming classes outlined in your show schedule.
- Try to provide your membership with the following year’s class schedule at the very beginning of the summer. This should give them plenty of time to take the photographs they might consider entering in the upcoming year.

- Consider the time of year in which photos need to be taken to meet the class requirements. If your schedule includes macro images of flowers members will need the schedule in hand at the beginning of the summer ahead of a show that might not take place until late in the fall or even the winter.
- Build in enough time for everyone to have photos properly mounted or matted. Consider offering a workshop on how to mount or mat your own photos. Photography can be expensive. Help your membership participate by exploring and incorporating cost effective ways that allow them all to participate.
- Discuss whether the Photography Class Schedule should share a theme with a club Floral Design Show. This can generate additional enthusiasm and creativity among floral designers and photographers. An example would be to prepare a schedule with a floral design class that is based on the photographs taken by your club members, and all exhibited at the same show.
- Identify a location for the show that provides adequate space and light for the display of photos. It is important that light reflections not bounce off the photos at the time they are being judged.
- Discuss how to display the photos. Visit the GCA Photography Web page and review “Guide to Displaying Photos” listed under Photography Education Resources. Optimal height for viewing a photography show is 50” – 60” from the floor. Ideally, judges should have the opportunity to judge standing 4 feet away from the photos.
- As soon as you have set a date for your show, reach out to your Zone Judging Rep and ask for her help in assembling a judging panel. Let her know if your club is willing to have the photos judged in advance of the club’s show date.
- Judging may occur in advance of the club show and does not need to take place where the show will be staged for viewing. Judging in advance is often advisable because it may be easier for your Zone to assemble a judging panel. It can also reduce the stress of setting up, passing, and judging on the same day of the show for both judging and pho-



tography committees. This means more time for members to enjoy viewing the show.

- It's also possible to have a show that is not judged. Invite photographers to bring photos of a specific subject like seascapes or winter wonderlands to a club meeting with the intention of sharing not judging images. This can lead to a great exchange of questions, answers, and ideas around photography. The photos can be simply shared on a tabletop using photo easels and set up in the area where your club enjoys its coffee hour.
- Speak with other clubs in your Zone to see if they have photography staging you might borrow for your club show.
- It is recommended that Club shows have a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 16 entries. Shows larger than this require two panels of judges, and this may be prohibitive given the number of judges and shows within each zone.
- Consider using online registration such as Signup Genius to fill each class rather than only using a clipboard at a meeting.
- Set a registration deadline.
- Limit each member's entries to one. The intention is to allow the greatest number of members to enter the show. An exception can be made for classes that have not filled by the registration deadline. At that point a member who has already entered another class would be allowed to enter a second class.
- Remind club photographers to review the Yellow Book for information on photography guidelines including subject material consistent with GCA interests.
- Consider offering a workshop that focuses on sharing potential entries with each other for critique. Ask your Zone Rep or an experienced photography member from your club to help offer critiques of the images in advance of printing them for the judging.

- Identify a date for the submission of photographs in advance of the show's judging date.
- Ask members of your club with an interest in photography to serve as passers for the show. This is an excellent way for all of us to learn more about how photos are judged and to incorporate this knowledge the next time we are photographing an image and preparing it for entry.
- Offer a short workshop on properly filling out an entry card. Remind entrants to identify plant material if applicable.
- Show members where they can find the entry cards online to print out at home.
- Suggest that members purchase light card stock to print their entry cards on.
- Set a place and time for photographs to be delivered to the photography chair in advance of the show. This provides your Photography Chair and passers time to review the photos to be certain they meet the class requirements.
- Club passers may not pass a class in which they are entered. There should be at least two passers for every three classes.
- Remember that Passers must indicate that the image has been passed on the entry card. Once the photograph has been passed it must be judged. Therefore, it is very important that the photograph meets the class description and requirements. This includes size, color or monochrome and mounting/matting.
- Passers should also check the condition of the photograph and if it shows signs of physical damage the photographer should be given time to re-submit the image.
- Passers need to confirm the entrant's Novice status asking the individual exhibitor if necessary.



## Resources for Planning a Club Photography Show

Remember, your Photo Zone Rep, Cathy Oneglia, [coneglia@gmail.com](mailto:coneglia@gmail.com), is always there to help answer questions. If I don't know the answer I will do my best to find it. Below is a list of titles from the GCA webpage, Photography Resource part of the Photography Landing Page. Go there for the information that you need for these topics. This information is invaluable.

Tips for Planning a Club Photography Show  
Tips for Managing a Virtual Club Photography Show  
Templates for Schedule, Awards and Entry Record Sheet  
Template for Entry Cards  
Search the GCA Calendar to find Schedule Ideas  
Guide to Displaying Photos at a Show  
Video: How to Make a Registration Form in Jotform  
Video: How to Make a Slideshow in Google Slides  
Video: Resizing Images Using an iPhone

## Judging Photography

### Scale of Points

|                                | Reg | CT  |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Creativity                     | 25  | 30  |
| Composition                    | 25  | 20  |
| Technical Skill                | 20  | 25  |
| Conformance/<br>Interpretation | 20  | 10  |
| Distinction                    | 10  | 15  |
| Total                          | 100 | 100 |

### There are three aspects to judging a photo:

1. Mental - why taken; WOW factor
2. Artistic Expression - arrangement of elements
3. Technical - Which aspect is the strongest? That is what the comment should be about.

## **Principles of Composition**

**(the image's organizing ideas)**

- 1. Balance** – The image should have a sense of balance using one of these forms :
  - Visual stability
  - Radial, coming from a central point
  - Symmetrical
  - Asymmetrical
- 2. Contrast** – Visible differences in the image's components
- 3. Dominance** – One component is more important than subordinate components
- 4. Proportion** – Comparative relationship in area
- 5. Rhythm** – Visual movement through the image
- 6. Scale** – The relative size of components

### **1. Color**

#### **Elements of Composition**

- Visual perception of spectrum of light
  - Hue - color name
  - Value - amount of light and dark
  - Chroma - intensity, saturation
- 2. Form** – Closed shapes created within the photograph
  - 3. Light/Value**
    - Light source
    - Impact of light on the subject
  - 4. Line**
    - Carries eye through design
    - Real or implied
    - Leading lines, diagonal or radial images
  - 5. Pattern** – Created by repetition of an element
  - 6. Space** – Successful utilization of photographic plane
  - 7. Texture** – Tactile element

**Instructive comments** – may often use the words “choice of...” and “detracts/competes” or “would be improved by”. A first does not need an instructive comment.

A juried photography show is one in which advance email registration is required and must be accompanied by a JPEG image of the photo being entered. The digital photos are juried by a panel of photography judges to determine the final entries for the show. The finalists then print, mount, and submit their photos to the show for final judging.

### ***Photography Guidelines for Juried Shows***

1. Please carefully read and follow the GCA rules, general information and timetable for exhibitors.
2. This is a juried show. Advance email registration is required and must be accompanied by a JPEG image of the photo being entered. The digital photos will be juried by a panel of photography judges to determine the final entries for the show. The finalists must mount their photos and send them with return packaging to the address listed below by the deadline. The entries will subsequently be displayed at (*show title*) for final judging. A person may submit only # entries and only one per class. There are (#) entries per class for the final judging.
3. Each photograph must be the work of the exhibitor under whose name it is registered.
4. Photographs that have won first place in a GCA Flower Show or GCA Major Flower Show may not be entered in competition again. A previously entered photograph, which did not place first, may be entered again if the image is altered and newly printed from its first showing and is accepted for final judging. The same photograph may only be entered in one show at a time.
5. Photography entries are limited to subjects consistent with GCA interests such as horticulture, floral design, gardens/landscapes, conservation/the environment, historic preservation, civic improvement and the natural world.
6. Plant identification is desirable where appropriate, but not required; when possible the common and botanical name(s) should be indicated on the entry card and on the back of the photograph.
7. Any manipulation at any stage must be the work of the exhibitor. This includes, but is not limited to, enhancement for color, clarity, removal of a part of the image, combining images, or distorting the original subject.
8. Accepted photographs must be flush mounted on mat board *or* matted with (*color*) mat board and not to exceed a total perimeter dimension larger than #". The surface finish of the photograph is the choice of the exhibitor. Glass, matting and framing are not permitted.

9. Registration is online only, and is required between (*date-date*) at (*web site.*) Subject line must include (*xxxxxx*). The JPEG image must be between 1 and 5 megabytes.
10. The results of the juried show will be emailed to all entrants on *date*. Those accepted for the final judging will then submit the printed, mounted photograph along with two copies of the photography entry form in the schedule (*or on line*). One form must be affixed to the mounting and one other additional copy is required. The top of the photograph should be indicated on the entry form.
11. Exhibitors may ship or deliver photographs and (2) entry forms to (*address*). Entries must be received no later than (*date*).
12. All photographs will be passed by the Photography Committee to verify if class specifications have been met. If a photograph is not passed, the exhibitor will be notified and permitted to send a replacement photograph. Any replacement must be received no later than (*date*).
13. The Photography Committee may reclassify an entry but only with the permission of the exhibitor. The Photography Committee and the judges may subdivide a class.
14. Scale of Points
 

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Creativity                 | 25        |
| Composition                | 25        |
| Technical Skill            | 20        |
| Conformance/Interpretation | 20        |
| Distinction                | <u>10</u> |
| Total:                     | 100       |
15. All entries are to be removed by (*date and time*). If a photograph entry is to be returned, the exhibitor must provide a pre-paid return label and packing material; no loose stamps, cash, or checks. Any award received will be noted on the back of the mount before it is returned. Results shall be emailed to all entrants after the show.



