

President's Message



Philip Thomas

NOV 2026

As we continue through another year of photography, fellowship, and learning, I want to thank our members for their continued support and participation in the Washington Park Camera Club (WPCC).

Over the past few months, we've welcomed new members, enjoyed some great photography, and had meaningful conversations about the future of our club. During our recent Open Mic meeting, members shared their thoughts on what they would like to see more of, including hands-on workshops, photo walks, mentoring opportunities, and activities that encourage us to learn from one another. This feedback is important as we consider the direction of the club and how we can better serve our membership.

I've always believed that WPCC is only as strong as the participation of its members. Whether you've been with us for decades or have only recently joined, everyone brings something valuable to the organization. Our different levels of experience, interests, and perspectives are part of what makes WPCC special.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2026

Dec 8
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm CST
WPCC Zoom – DPI Competition

Dec 15
6:00 pm - 6:30 pm CST
WPCC In-Person: Holiday Party

January 2027

Jan 5
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm CST
WPCC IN-PERSON & ZOOM: Print & DPI Competition

President’s Message continued

For more than 70 years, the Washington Park Camera Club has brought people together through a shared passion for photography. As we look toward the future, it's important that we continue building on that legacy while remaining open to new ideas, approaches, and opportunities. Our goal should be to create an environment where members feel welcome, are encouraged to participate, and have opportunities to grow as photographers.

Participation doesn't always require a major commitment. Attending meetings, entering competitions, volunteering on a committee, sharing your photography, or simply helping another member are all ways to contribute. Sometimes the smallest contributions can have the greatest impact.

I also want to recognize our Executive Committee, committee chairs, and the many members who volunteer their time and talents throughout the year. Much of what happens behind the scenes is made possible by their dedication, and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

As we move forward, I encourage everyone to consider what they hope to gain from their membership and, equally important, what they can contribute to the club. **This is YOUR club**, and its continued success depends on all of us.

Let's continue learning, sharing, supporting one another, and, most importantly, enjoying our photography.

Happy Shooting!

Philip

WASHINGTON PARK CAMERA CLUB OFFICERS

Philip Thomas
President

Bonnie DuBose
Vice President

Marcus
Secretary

Rennie Ellis
Treasurer





WELCOME TO OUR NEW

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

I'm excited to introduce myself as the new editor of Washington Park In Focus newsletter! Like many of you, I've missed receiving our club newsletter, and I'm delighted to help bring it back. But one thing I know for sure—a great newsletter is never the work of just one person. It's a team effort, and this issue is proof of what we can accomplish together.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who helped make this issue possible. To the members who contributed articles, shared their wonderful photographs, and generously gave their time to proofread and offer suggestions. And, let's not forget the work of the DPI and Print Competition committees. A big hug and thank-you to you all! Your contributions are what make this newsletter special.

As I begin this new role, my hope is that **Washington Park In Focus** will continue to be a place where we celebrate our members, share our experiences, learn from one another, and find inspiration to keep growing as photographers.

And remember, this is **YOUR** newsletter! I welcome your stories, photographs, ideas, and suggestions for future issues. After all, every photographer has a story worth sharing. Happy shooting, and enjoy the issue!

Donna Beasley, Editor

IN THIS NEWSLETTER YOU WILL FIND:

- Costa Rica Trip - Charles Walker takes us on his photographic journey
- Stepping into New Territory - Latasha Young shares a new photography experience
- Salvador, Bahia, Brazil - Ted Evans shares the rich culture and heritage of Brazil
- Competition Winners for October and November 2026
- Industry and Photography News



Costa Rica

By Charles Walker

My best trip in 2026 was a trip to Costa Rica. It was put together by the Road Runner Photography Group, which is run by my friends, Geff and Denise. We started digital photography together in the same photo club 20 years ago. If you're interested in bird photography, Costa Rica is the place to go; it's not limited to bird photography, and there is plenty of other wildlife to photograph. I was accompanied by another Washington Park Camera Club member, Sherry Bellamy. This made the trip even more enjoyable.

If you've never experienced a pure photo tour trip, I highly recommend it. It's so different from a regular tour. It costs more, but it’s well worth it. You get up with fellow photographers, you go out and take pictures during the golden hour, and you stay out and take pictures during the blue hour. You're with a tour guide, someone that speaks the language, and someone that knows the land. This makes all the difference in the world.

The trip comprised a time of 14 days where you traveled from the lowlands to the highlands. All the country travel was handled by a single bus, of which there were only two different drivers. This allows you to leave stuff on the bus overnight, which made life simpler. During the travel we experience temperatures from where you must wear a jacket to only wearing a short-sleeve shirt. During our travels we stayed in various hotels where the accommodations range from plush to very sparse. My roommate and I had to shoo a bat out of one of the rooms.

You might call it cheating, but a lot of the photo sessions were set up for you. We had macro photography sessions, bird photography sessions, hummingbird multi-flash sessions, bat multi-flash sessions, and a boat tour. As an example, for the bat multi-flash, a feeder was set up for the bats. It was surrounded by at least three strobe lights, and you were given the flash trigger. For macro photography a handler would actually capture a snake or a frog and place it where you can photograph it.

For me, Costa Rica was a fantastic tour. I've heard stories of people going during the rainy season, and it rained every day. We were extremely fortunate; the one day it rained, we were undercover and photographed birds in rain. If you're a wildlife photographer, you should put this on your "To Do" list.

Image of The Month - October
Fresh Catch
by Charles Walker





Image of The Month - November
St. Regis Chicago
By Tony Beard

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS

DPI Award Winners - October 2026



CHARLES WALKER: FRESH CATCH



CHARLES WALKER: TREE FROG



CHARLES WALKER: SUMMER FUN



CHARLES WALKER: HUMMINGBIRD MOTH

DPI October Honarble Mentions - October 2026



CAROL NEAL: RED ROCKS OF SODONNA



TED EVANS: NIGHT HERON



KARIES CARTER: BULL RIDING



TED EVANS: CHICAGO NIGHTS

DPI Award Winners - November 2026



CHARLES WALKER: FISH TOSS



SHERY BELLAMY: REFLECTIONS IN AMBER



SHERRY BELLAMY: SEA SCULPTING



KARIES CARTER: COMMON BLACK HAWK

DPI Honarble Mentions - November 2026



KARIES CARTER: GREEN CROWNED BRILLIANT HUMMINGBIRD



CHARLES WALKER: KATYDDID



SHERRY BELLAMY: INLINE



CHARLES WALKER: TASTE OF NECTER

PRINT Large Award Winners - November 2026



TONY BEARD: INDIA TEMPLE



TONY BEARD: ST REGIS HOTEL CHICAGO

PRINT Small Award Winners - November 2026

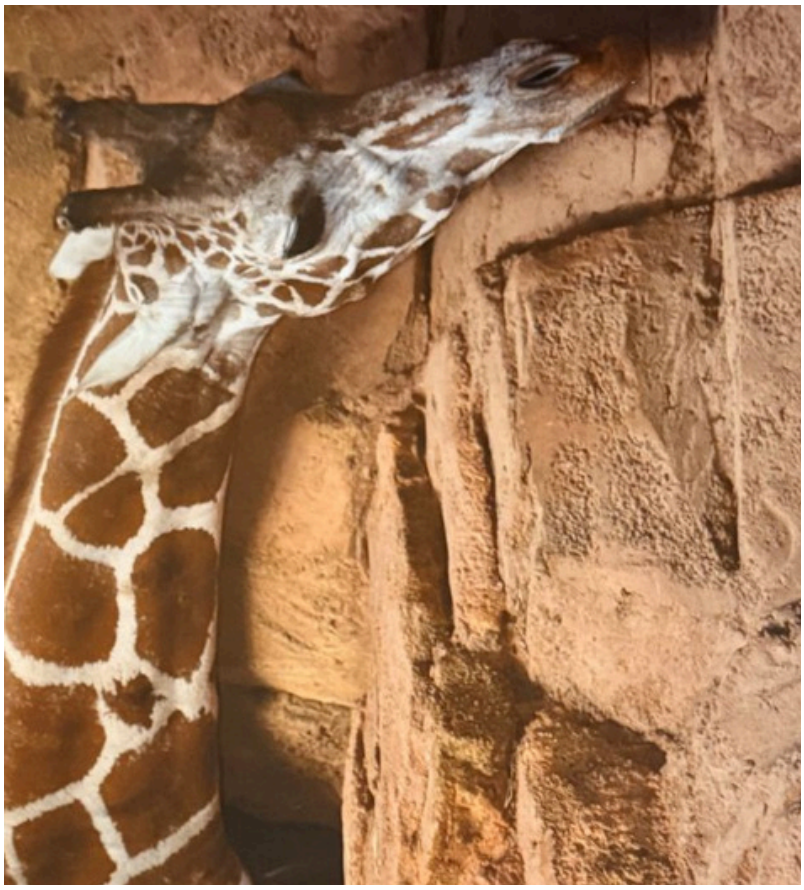


TED EVANS: PERCHED IN MAJESTY



TED EVANS: A BRUSHSTROKE IN BLUE

Print Large Honarble Mention - November 2026

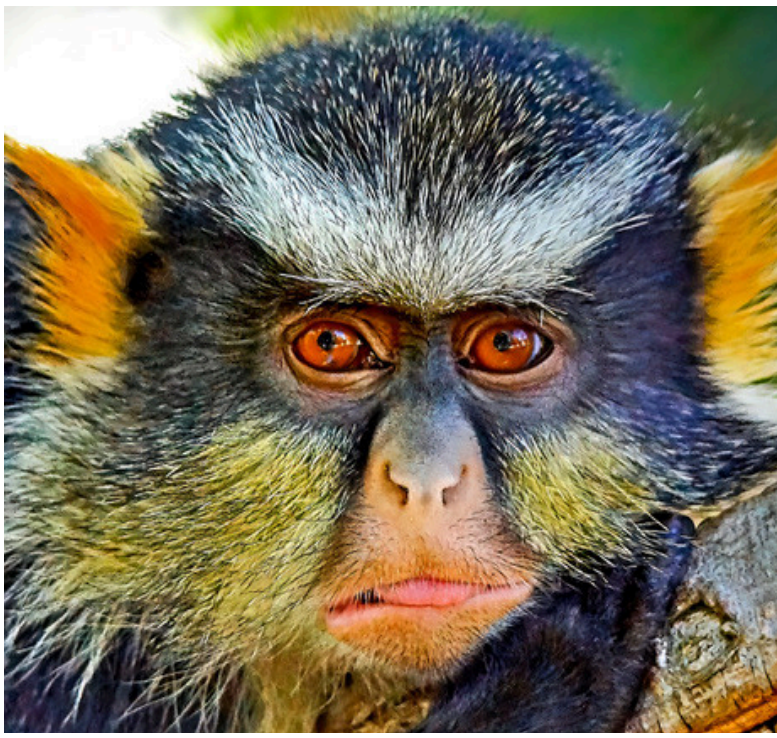


RUTH GODBOLT: I AM RESTING

Print Small Honarble Mentions - November 2026



JERLYN MALOY: SAILING ON THE ATLANTIC



TONY BEARD: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Print Small Monochrome Award Winner - November 2026



TONY BEARD: THEE OLD WINDMILL

Print Small Monochrome Honarble Mentions November 2026



KARIES CARTER:ELEGANCE IN FLIGHT



DONNA BEASLEY: LONG WALK TO THE ALTER

Stepping Into New Territory!

-by LaTasha Young



This past year has been a time of taking my photography skills out of the "comfort zone" and I have grown from the experience! When my long-time friend told me about his plan to propose to his then girlfriend and that he wanted me to photograph the surprise, I was ecstatic for the opportunity and nervous at the same time. It was my first engagement shoot, so I prepared and prayed that I would do a great job for this memorable occasion. The couple loved their engagement photos so much that they asked me to do their wedding by myself!



I had never done a wedding as the lead photographer so my first response was 'No', thinking about how important these lifetime memories are. After a few convincing conversations, I decided that the only way I would do it was if I had a partner experienced in wedding photography.

Success was had all around! The couple agreed, I was blessed to work with Dennis Hurd from our club, and, in the end, my friends said, "they were very happy with their wedding photos!"

Here are a few things I learned or was reminded of from both the engagement and wedding shoots:

Stay calm! Even though this was not my first event to photograph, I was nervous. However, actually being in the church before the wedding, for the rehearsal, was a great help and reduced a lot of anxiety. My nerves calmed as I visualized the various places I would stand in the room for the best pictures.

Having a list of poses on my phone and printed, from different online tutorials (some I searched and others Dennis recommended), prevented me from forgetting the important shots that I had planned.

I watched Dennis masterfully keep the couple/bridal party photoshoot moving after the wedding, making sure everyone stayed focused, so we could remain within our timeframe. The couple expressed that they really appreciated that.

Charge appropriately! I really struggled here, especially since the bride and groom were my friends. The challenge is accounting for all the time spent during the event as well as the editing time after the event. You don't want to overcharge but you do want to charge appropriately for all the time and effort spent as well as all of your equipment costs.

Have a contract and discuss it with the client. The contract will outline expectations from both you as the photographer and the client. This is really important because having the terms in writing prevents any misunderstandings from either party especially surrounding important items like payments, etc.



Dennis also showed me how important it is to practice shooting during the wedding rehearsal. This is the perfect time to test out whatever lenses you plan to use. You might find that some work better or differently than others.

Interact with the wedding guests throughout the day to help them feel more comfortable with you, which will make for better photos!

Overall, I feel so blessed to have ventured out into engagement and wedding photography and having had Dennis help me on this new journey!

"What I like about photographs is that they capture a moment that's gone forever, impossible to reproduce."
Karl Lagerfeld

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil: A Journey Through African Heritage, Culture, and the Lens of History

BY TED EVANS

Some journeys take you to a destination. Others take you deep into history, culture, and the spirit of a people. Our October 2026 journey to Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, was certainly the latter.



Thirteen travelers from across the United States came together for an extraordinary cultural, educational, and wellness experience organized by Master Yoga Instructor Brother Yiser Ra Hotep. Assisting him were an exceptional team of administrators and master practitioners: Queen Afua, Sister Shalaethia, Sister Khalidah Kali, and Brother Amani Kush of Salvador, Brazil.

Our international journey began in Chicago, with connecting flights through Montreal and São Paulo before arriving in Salvador. After a long trip, we settled into the Wish Hotel, our home base for an unforgettable experience exploring African heritage, spirituality, dance, wellness, and photography.



Salvador: Where African Heritage Lives

Salvador, the capital of Brazil's northeastern state of Bahia, is widely regarded as the historical and cultural heart of Afro-Brazilian heritage. Known as Roma Negra, or "Black Rome," the city has a population with a substantial African ancestry and is internationally recognized for its African-influenced music, religion, food, dance, and traditions.

Salvador's history is deeply connected to the transatlantic slave trade. Enslaved Africans were brought to Brazil through its port to work on sugar and cacao plantations. Despite centuries of oppression, African communities preserved their spiritual traditions, cultural identity, and practices of resistance. Today, Candomblé, samba, and capoeira remain important expressions of Afro-Brazilian identity.

The city's historic center, Pelourinho, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. Its colorful colonial buildings, cobblestone streets, historic churches, and lively marketplaces provide extraordinary photographic opportunities.

Exploring Salvador: History, Architecture, and Culture

Our first full day took us to Pelourinho, where we explored the Museum of Afro-Brazilian Culture. Its three floors featured African-inspired artwork, artifacts, and historical exhibits. The prominent role of women in preserving and leading Candomblé traditions was especially meaningful.

Walking through Pelourinho, we encountered vendors selling clothing, food, artwork, and handcrafted treasures. The neighborhood is also famous as the setting for Michael Jackson's 1996 music video, They Don't Care About Us, which featured local residents and the percussion group Olodum.

Other highlights included the Barra Lighthouse and historic fort overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, the Museum of Modern Art, and Mercado Modelo. We also experienced the famous Elevator Lacerda, which connects Salvador's Upper City (Cidade Alta) with its Lower City (Cidade Baixa).

For photographers, the opportunities were endless: colorful architecture, expressive faces, street vendors, historic landmarks, and the everyday activities of a vibrant community.

Samba, Nature, and Spiritual Discovery

One of our most enjoyable experiences was participating in a samba workshop. Our instructor was a true taskmaster, demonstrating the discipline, rhythm, and energy required to master this traditional dance.

We also traveled approximately two hours along the scenic Linha Verde to Praia do Forte, where we visited Projeto Tamar, a renowned sea turtle conservation center. There we observed sea turtles, manta rays, and tropical fish. Nature photography was another highlight. I enjoyed birding near the Hotel da Bahia, while our visit to São Bartolomeu Park in the Pirajá region introduced us to waterfalls, tropical vegetation, exotic birds, and wild horses. The park is also a sacred natural setting associated with Candomblé traditions.









Our visit to the Lake of the Orishas and a Candomblé temple provided a deeper understanding of this Afro-Brazilian religious tradition, which developed from West and Central African spiritual practices. Its relationship with nature, ancestors, music, and community remains an important part of Bahia's cultural identity.

These experiences demonstrated how African heritage, spirituality, environmental preservation, and resistance are intertwined throughout Salvador.



Dance, Cultural Performance, and the Meeting of the Masters

One special morning, Sister Khalidah Kali conducted a North African Dance Experience with several women in a beautiful cultural park. The early morning setting provided a wonderful atmosphere for movement, wellness, and cultural expression.

We also visited São Joaquim Market, an expansive open-air marketplace where African-Bahian traditions, food, herbs, spiritual articles, and community commerce come together.

That evening, we attended an outstanding cultural performance at the Centro Cultural Makota Valdina Theater in Pelourinho. The dancers presented a historical interpretation of Bahian culture through choreography featuring Candomblé and capoeira. It was a powerful demonstration of how dance preserves history and communicates cultural identity.

Our ninth day was dedicated to what we call the Meeting of the Masters. Master Yiser Ra Hotep led demanding yoga movements emphasizing flexibility, strength, breathing, and physical discipline. Queen Afua presented an extensive workshop on herbal formulas and holistic wellness tools. Finally, Queen Khalidah conducted a well-received workshop featuring North African dance and healing movement techniques

The experience culminated with the second annual Soul Yoga Fest at Parque da Cidade. We spent the entire day participating in yoga, health techniques, wellness activities, and the exchange of ideas with the larger Bahian wellness community.

Through the Lens: Lessons from Salvador

As members of the Washington Park Camera Club, we understand that photography is more than capturing attractive images. It is about documenting people, preserving history, communicating emotions, and telling stories.

Salvador challenged us to look beyond the obvious. Its architecture offered remarkable opportunities for architectural photography. Its marketplaces and street performers provided exciting street photography subjects. Samba, capoeira, and cultural dance presented opportunities to capture movement and expression. Praia do Forte and São Bartolomeu Park offered beautiful opportunities for nature and wildlife photography.

The welcoming people of Bahia were another highlight. We found many residents friendly and open to conversation. The spring weather was generally around 80 degrees, making walking and outdoor exploration especially enjoyable.

For future travelers, comfortable walking shoes are essential for Pelourinho's hilly cobblestone streets. Bring extra camera batteries, memory cards, and versatile lenses. Brazil uses the Brazilian real, so check exchange rates before departure. Visitors should also respect religious traditions, ask permission before photographing people or ceremonies, and remain aware of their surroundings.

Final Reflections: More Than a Vacation

Our October 14–26 journey to Salvador, Bahia, was much more than an international vacation. It was an opportunity to reconnect with African heritage, explore the history of resistance, experience spiritual traditions, embrace holistic wellness, and develop friendships across cultures. The leadership of Master Yiser Ra Hotep, Queen Afua, Sister Shalaethia, Sister Khalidah Kali, and Brother Amani Kush made this experience especially meaningful.

Perhaps the greatest lesson from Salvador is that history does not live exclusively in museums or books. It lives in the people, music, food, dance, spiritual practices, and traditions passed from one generation to another.

For the Washington Park Camera Club, this journey reinforced an important principle: A photograph can capture a moment, but a meaningful photograph tells a story. Salvador, Bahia gave us thousands of stories to bring home. Until our next photographic adventure, keep your cameras ready, your eyes open, and your curiosity alive!





HEARTBREAKING PHOTOGRAPH WINS

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

The Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition has revealed its 2026 winners, with an extraordinary image of an elephant carrying a deceased calf crowned the year's best wildlife photograph.

Italian photographer **Federico Veronesi** won the prestigious competition with, **“The Aftermath,”**an emotional black-and-white image of an elephant carrying her deceased calf in Namibia.

Selected from a record-breaking 65,403 entries from 121 countries and territories, this year's winners showcase powerful stories from the natural world and the urgent need to protect it.



Audubon Photography Awards Celebrates Bird Photography

Jacqueline Burke received the 2026 U.S. and Canada Grand Prize for her photograph of a **Roseate Spoonbill**. The awards recognize photography that celebrates birds and conservation across the Americas.



Open Photographer of Year

The Barefoot Volcanologist by **Elle Leontiev**
On the ash plains of Mount Yasur, on the island of Tanna, Vanuatu, Phillip, an internationally recognised, self-taught volcanologist, stands barefoot atop a volcanic rock bomb. Wearing a lava-protection suit gifted to him by some visiting researchers, the volcano smoulders behind him, sending a plume of gas and sulphur into the sky.

Industry News and Happenings



ADOBE INTRODUCES NEW AI-POWERED PHOTOGRAPHY TOOLS

At Adobe MAX on November 10, Adobe announced new Lightroom features including cinematic Glow effects, improved blemish removal, and an early-access tool for correcting closed eyes. Photoshop also gained new AI-assisted editing capabilities.

Is AI Changing Photography—or Just the Way We Edit? Where should photographers draw the line between enhancement and manipulation? What are your thoughts?

PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS IMPROVING

Photography business performance is improving year-over-year, though inconsistent client inquiries remain a major challenge for most independent creators.

Recent Q3 2026 industry tracking from Zoe Hiljemark's Photography Marketing Survey highlights key developments across the sector.

LIGHTROOM EXPANDS TETHERED SHOOTING AND PHOTO SELECTION TOOLS

Lightroom's November 2026 update improves tethered shooting for supported Canon, Nikon, Sony, and Fujifilm cameras.

Photographers can review images on a computer as they shoot and compare similar shots more easily.

Great photography is about depth of feeling, not depth of field.” - Peter Adams