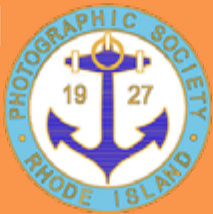


IN FOCUS



July—August 2026

Volume 99, Issue 6

The Newsletter of the Photographic Society of Rhode Island

CELEBRATING PHOTOGRAPHY IN RHODE ISLAND SINCE 1927



Catboat & Lighthouse, Cape Cod. Photo by Ted Lawson

PSRI

Board of Directors

President

Dave DeMarco
psri-president@psri.us

1st VP

Chris Williamson
psri-vp1@psri.us

2nd VP

Lisa Bushee
psri-vp2@psri.us

Treasurer

Ted Lawson
psri-treasurer@psri.us

Secretary

Lauren Lambert
psri-secretary@psri.us

At-Large Board Members

Deb Page
psri-debpage@psri.us

Holly Trahan
psri-hollytrahan@psri.us

Laura Landen

Newsletter

Editorial designer
Bernadette van der Vliet
Send comments and
submissions to:
PSRI-newsletter@psri.us



Fishing boats at Galilee. Photo by Dave DeMarco

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| President's Message | 3 |
| Calendar and Meetups | 4 |
| Open Competition #5 Winners | 5 |
| PSRI Annual Dinner & Awards Night | 6 |
| Image of the Year | 7 |
| Ninigret Park and Fantastic Umbrella Factory Meetup | 9 |
| Photography and Mindfulness: Finding Peace Behind the Lens | 10 |
| PSRI Flashback | 11 |
| Nature Competition #2 Winners | 11 |
| Ask AI | 12 |
| Cereal Champions | 13 |
| Lauren Lambert - recipient of the 2026 CTM MVP Award | 14 |
| Meetup at the Fishing Fleet of Galilee | 16 |
| Trustum Pond Meetup | 17 |
| What Photography Has Taught Me | 18 |
| Horn Pond Meetup | 20 |
| Annual Dinner and Awards Night Photos | 22 |
| Committee Chairs | 24 |

President's Message



I would like to take a moment to thank Bob Mattera, our outgoing President, for his two years of dedicated service to the club. Bob has set a high bar through his commitment to PSRI and his genuine care for both the club and its members. He leaves some very big shoes to fill.

I would also like to thank our 2026–2027 Board members, committee chairs, and the many volunteers who are truly the heart of our organization. PSRI has remained strong for more than 100 years because so many members are willing to contribute their time, talents, and energy.

As we head into the new season, I have three areas of focus that I believe will help the club continue to grow and thrive.

First, I want to maintain and strengthen the wonderful culture of camaraderie that makes PSRI such a special organization. One of the topics highlighted in our recent membership survey was the role of Zoom meetings. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this and other topics

as we explore ways to expand participation opportunities while preserving the strong sense of community that defines our club.

Second, I would like to focus on attracting new members. This year's Open House and our participation in the Wickford Art Association Festival were excellent examples of how we can raise awareness of PSRI within the community. I hope to build on those efforts and explore additional ways to introduce new photographers to the club, particularly younger photographers who will help shape PSRI's future.

Third, competitions provide valuable feedback and learning opportunities for those who participate. They help us grow as photographers and improve our craft. I would like to explore ways to make constructive image feedback more accessible to a larger portion of our membership. This may involve developing new opportunities for learning beyond our traditional competition format.

I am excited about the season ahead and look forward to working together to build on PSRI's proud tradition. If you have ideas, suggestions, or thoughts and you would like to share, please feel free to reach out to me at psri-president@psri.us

Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to seeing everyone in the fall!

Dave DeMarco



End of Year Banquet, June 16, 2026. Photo by Bernadette van der Vliet

PSRI Mission Statement

The mission of the Photographic Society of Rhode Island is to promote photography as an art form and provide a supportive community for photographers of all skill levels. We aim to inspire creativity, improve technical skills, and encourage artistic growth among our members through education, exhibits, competitions, photo outings, and networking events. By creating opportunities to share knowledge and critiques in a positive environment, we hope to advance the craft of photography in our community.

We invite you to join us at one of our meetings to experience this energy firsthand. You will meet people of great photographic talent, and great people to boot.

Calendar July/August 2026

There are no meetings in July and August.

Upcoming Meetups



PSRI members at the Horn Pond meetup on May 16, 2026.
Photo by Bob Arnold

July:

Lavender Pond Farm

Monday, July 13 @ 10am
318 Roast Meat Hill Road, Killingworth, CT
[Visit their website](#) for more details

RSVP to Lauren, tel. # 401-573-9612

Other Meetups:

Providence Pedestrian Bridge (and surrounding area at sunset): architecture, long exposures, etc.
Providence, RI.
Date TBD.

Classic and Hot Rod Cars: Oakland Beach Cruise Night, Warwick, RI. Dates TBA.

Milky Way: Date and place TBD

DTLE (Daytime Long Exposure). Date and place TBD.

Keep an eye out for emails about upcoming meetups.

Interested in seeing what the Photographic Society of Rhode Island is all about?

Join as a Guest Member for 30 days. Fill out the [registration form](#) and select the 30-day guest option.

Scan QR code to go to our website



PSRI has a booth at the festival on both days. So come by!



Wickford Art Festival

Proudly produced by the Wickford Art Association since 1962.

JULY 11 & 12, 2026

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

WILSON PARK

211 W. MAIN STREET
NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI

PSRI is a Proud member of:



Advertisement

Midstate Camera Repair

123 N. Main St., 2nd Floor, Suite #4
Providence, RI 02903

midstatecamerarepair.com

Mark A. Fortin
midstatemark78@gmail.com
401-467-7390

"WE FOCUS ON SERVICE" PROUDLY SERVICING CAMERAS SINCE 1978



Open Competition #5 Winning Images



Ted Lawson



Bernadette van der Vliet



Dave DeMarco



Mike Di Stefano



Dennis Goulet



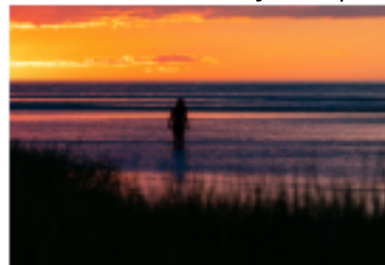
Jean Caputo



Syed Rizvi



Bernadette van der Vliet



Chris Williamson



Mike Di Stefano



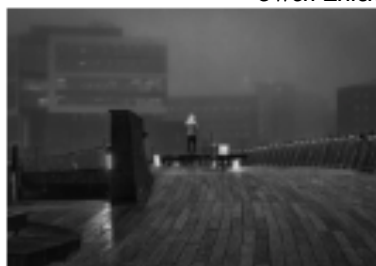
Owen Erlich



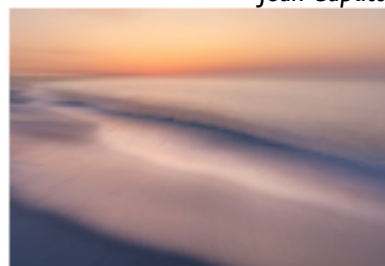
Jean Caputo



Tara Marshall



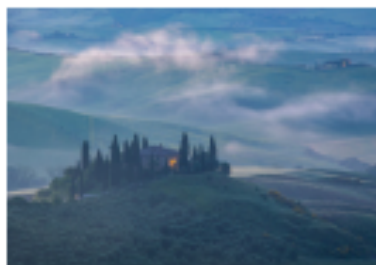
Lorraine Anderson



Dave DeMarco



Noreen Berthiaume



Tara Marshall



Helen Lambiasi

To see the winning images in full size, [click here](#)

PSRI Annual Dinner & Awards Night SHINES AT THE SAFEHOUSE



By Bob Arnold. The Photographic Society of Rhode Island gathered on June 16, 2026, for its Annual Dinner and Awards Presentation—an evening filled with celebration, camaraderie, and a packed house at The Safehouse. With excellent food and even better company, members came together to honor a year of creativity, leadership, and photographic excellence.

One of the night's top honors, the Charlie Miller Award, was presented to Lauren Lambert, recognizing her outstanding contributions to the club. Mike Di Stefano also took the stage to present the MNECCC Award to Tara Marshall, while Bob Mattera received the Outgoing President's Award for the second consecutive year—an acknowledgment of his dedication and steady leadership.

The club also welcomed its new president, Dave DeMarco, who introduced himself with gratitude and enthusiasm. He thanked both current and incoming board members and expressed his commitment to continuing the strong leadership tradition set by his predecessor.

Competition Highlights

The evening celebrated the remarkable work of PSRI photographers across multiple divisions:

Digital Open – Class B

1st: Dave DeMarco
2nd: Doug Ray
3rd: Chris Williamson
Image of the Year: Dave DeMarco

Digital Open – Class A

1st: Bernadette van der Vliet
2nd: Joan Teno
3rd: Lorraine Anderson
Image of the Year: Lorraine Anderson

Digital Open – Class AA

1st: Tara Marshall
2nd: Kimberly Sorrell
3rd: Syed Rizvi
Image of the Year: Owen Erlich

Nature – Class A

1st: Dave DeMarco
2nd: Marjorie Lamphear
3rd: Chris Williamson
Image of the Year: Dave DeMarco

Nature – Class AA

1st: Deb Page & Owen Erlich
2nd: Susie Dorr
3rd: Kimberly Sorrell & Dennis Goulet
Image of the Year: Deb Page



Slide Awards

Open Competition
1st: Ray Guillette
2nd: Doug Ray
3rd: Mike Di Stefano
Image of the Year: Ray Guillette

Print Competitions

Color Prints – Class B

1st: Jean Caputo
2nd: Lincoln Smith
3rd: Jeff Reynolds
Image of the Year: Nancy Tynan

Color Prints – Class A

1st: Tara Marshall
2nd: Owen Erlich
3rd: Dennis Goulet
Image of the Year: Owen Erlich

Black & White Prints

1st: Tara Marshall
2nd: Mike Di Stefano & Noreen Berthiaume
3rd: Ted Lawson
Image of the Year: Noreen Berthiaume

The night was a warm reminder of the talent, dedication, and community spirit that define PSRI.

Congratulations to all the winners, and here's to another year of creativity and inspiration.

[More photos of the night on page 22](#)

IMAGE OF THE YEAR



Digital Image - Class AA.
Open Competition
Reflection by Owen Erlich



Digital Image - Class A, Open
Competition
Stranded on the Brewster Flats
by Lorraine Anderson



Digital Image - Class B, Open
Competition
Starry Beavertail Night by
Dave DeMarco



Slides - Open Competition
Newport Afterglow by
Ray Guillette

IMAGE OF THE YEAR

CONTINUED



Color Print - Class A, Open Competition
Autumn by Owen Erlich



Digital Image - Class AA, Nature Competition
Forget it Gully by Deb Page



Digital Image - Class A, Nature Competition
Just for You by Dave DeMarco



Color Print - Class B, Open Competition
Paris as the Sun Sets by Nancy Tynan



Black & White Print, Open Competition
Evolution of a Lotus by Noreen Berthiaume

Ninigret park and Fantastic Umbrella Factory *Meetup*



Bob Mattera

By Lauren Lambert. It was a beautiful morning on June 4th, as PSRI members met to photograph Greta Granit and Erik Rock, giant trolls in the woods of Ninigret park in Charlestown, RI. These unique and beautiful creations are the work of world-renowned Danish artist Thomas Dambo. Made from repurposed materials including wood, quahog shells, beach stones, straw, and other natural items, these trolls were really something to see!

After photographing the trolls, the group continued on to explore the grounds of the Fantastic Umbrella Factory, a RI landmark since 1968. A bamboo forest, various animals, flowers, and whimsical signs and sculptures provided many photographic opportunities at this hidden gem tucked away in the woods.



Lauren Lambert



Lauren Lambert



Joan Teno



Bob Mattera



PHOTOGRAPHY AND MINDFULNESS: FINDING PEACE BEHIND THE LENS

Photo by Mike Dooley

By Mike Dooley Before I even leave the house for an outing, there is a quiet ritual that begins. I carefully prepare my equipment, checking each piece with intention. Cameras, lenses, batteries, filters, tripod—every tool has a purpose.

As I inspect and pack my gear, I wonder what the morning will bring. I know where I am going; I can picture it in my mind: the woods, the path, and ultimately the water's edge. But I don't know what I am going to find. Will it be a cloud or a rock? Maybe it's not a thing at all, but a shape, a reflection, or a fleeting moment of light.

There is comfort in this routine, almost like a musician tuning an instrument before a performance.

In a world that is constantly rushing, photography asks something different of us. It asks us to slow down.

When I walk with my camera, I notice things I might otherwise miss: the

curve of morning light on a sandy beach, the rhythm of the waves, the quiet patterns hidden in plain sight. The camera becomes less of a machine and more of a doorway into awareness.

There is also peace in the technical process itself. Adjusting settings, composing carefully, waiting for the right light—these actions require focus. And focus has a calming effect. For those moments, the noise of everyday life fades into the background.

Photography teaches patience. It teaches observation. It teaches us that beauty is often quiet and easily overlooked.

Some of my favorite moments are not even the photographs themselves, but the stillness surrounding them: standing alone at sunrise while the world wakes slowly, hearing nothing but wind, birds, or the click of a shutter, feeling completely immersed in a single moment.

In that sense, photography becomes a form of mindfulness. Not because we are trying to escape life, but because we are finally paying attention to it.

Perhaps that is why photography feels almost sacred to me. It is not only about creating images. It is about learning to see.

And maybe, in learning to truly see the world around us, we also learn to better see ourselves.

So I encourage you to grab your camera—any camera—and go for a walk on the beach, through the woods, or down a quiet street. Slow down. Look carefully. Listen to the world around you.

You may come home with a photograph you love.

But more importantly, you may come home feeling peaceful.

PSRI FLASHBACK

Capturing Moments, Reviving Memories!

by Lincoln Smith

Dr. Ray Guillette Scores with Fine “Indoor Flowers” Program

The building quivered from the torrential rain and blasts from the fierce winds outside, but the brilliant colors and beautiful images of flowers brightened the room at the Feb. 12th meeting. The 40+ members who braved the inclement weather were well rewarded with a fascinating instructional session from Dr. Ray Guillette, who has mastered the technique of flower photography to a level of ultimate perfection.

Dr. Guillette stated that his aim in specializing in flower photography is simply to make a pleasing photograph, to appreciate fully the form and beauty of a blossom. His techniques developed after considerable experimentation to concentrate on a combination of window light combined with some controlled

flash exposures. He relies heavily on the careful use of reflectors and the occasional “filtering” of window light by lightweight paper pasted to the glass. “Translucence”, he stated, “often adds interest,” but added that the light must be carefully directed to fall so that any harsh shadows are moderated. He spent much time on describing the selection of backgrounds, pointing out that black adds drama and impact but, use of complementary colors is usually best.

His equipment – simple light stands, a very sturdy tripod and careful arrangements of aluminum foil tacked to cardboard for reflectors, is setup before clean windows; he has found that a sheet of plexiglass lightly sanded makes a fine diffuser. He explained that often it is easy to

eliminate “hot spots” by simply placing masking tape on the window in the critical location. He often researches his subjects in Audubon publications and travels throughout New England for unusual wildflowers.

Dr. Guillette is a personable, poised lecturer; his clear and orderly descriptions of excellent techniques within the reach of all amateur photographers should be very valuable. Our NECC Nature Division entries should improve considerably if members make effective use of his methods for indoor and outdoor flower photography.

Unknown author and it was published in the “In Focus” newsletter of the Camera Club of Providence, Volume 57: No. 5, May-June 1985, Our 57th Year.

Nature Competition #2 Winning Images



Susie Dorr



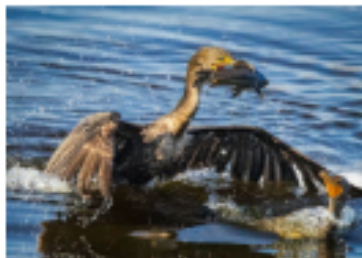
Dave DeMarco



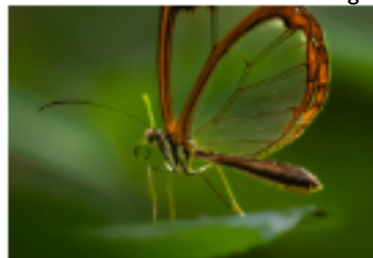
Deb Page



Lauren Lambert



Greg Kniseley



Mike Di Stefano

To see the winning images in full size, [click here](#)

BY BOB MATTERA

Ask AI

One great use of AI tools for photographers goes beyond normal research, and not as far as image manipulation. That is, image reviews. In this issue we use ChatGPT to offer help in deciding which image might work well for submission to a photo club competition. Here is the question I posed and the exact answer I got back:

Q Act like a judge in a photo club competition and review each of the three images. Then, recommend one for submission. I picked these because my heart is set on submitting a sunset or sunrise, and I like that each of them are over water. If it helps to know then I will add that they all were shot at Narragansett Pier.

A I'll review these as I would in a photo club competition, with the understanding that all three are sunrise or sunset images over water and that they were photographed at Narragansett Pier.



The first image, with the kayak fisherman silhouetted against the large red-orange sun, has the strongest human story of the three. The sun is dramatic, the color is rich, and the figure gives the viewer a clear subject beyond “pretty sunset.” The kayak, fishing rod, and bird in the foreground create a

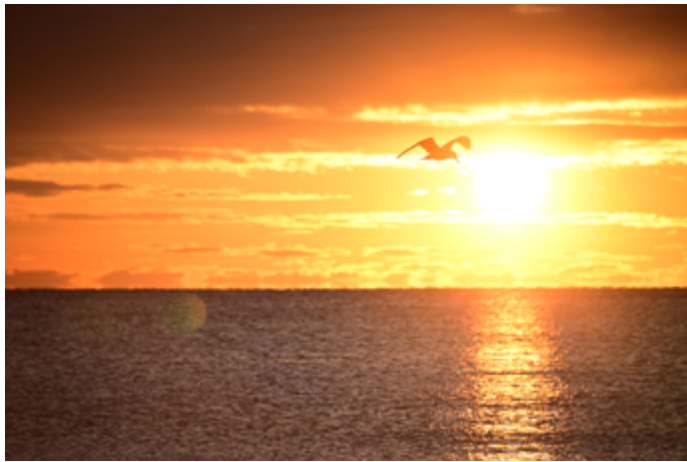
nice sense of place and quiet activity. The image has mood. A judge would likely respond to that.

The main concern is that there is a lot happening in the lower half of the frame. The bird in the foreground is interesting, but it also competes with the fisherman. The kayak is quite dark, and the details are mostly silhouette, which is fine, but the shapes need to be very clean in this kind of image. Still, this photograph has a narrative quality that makes it memorable.



The second image, with the sun rising or setting behind the distant lighthouse and rocks, is probably the most classically composed of the three. The layers are strong: foreground water, dark rocks, distant land, lighthouse, glowing sky, and large sun. The lighthouse gives the image a recognizable Narragansett subject, and the warm haze helps separate the layers. This one feels quieter and more refined than the first.

The challenge is the very bright sun. In competition, judges often look closely at whether the brightest part of the image still holds detail. Here, the sun is powerful but may be close to blown out. Even so, the overall composition is strong, and the distant lighthouse gives the image a point of interest that rewards the viewer after the initial impact of the sun.



The third image, with the bird crossing in front of the bright sun, has a nice idea behind it. The bird adds life and timing, and the reflection on the water gives the image a strong vertical line. However, this is the weakest of the three for competition. The sun is extremely bright and dominates the frame, and the bird, while well placed, is not quite strong enough to overcome the blown highlight area. The lens flare in the lower left also draws attention away from the main subject. It feels more like a dramatic moment than a fully resolved competition image.

My recommendation would be to submit the second image.

The first image may have the most story, but the second has the strongest overall competition structure. It has mood, place, depth, and a clean arrangement of visual elements. The lighthouse and rocks make it more than just a beautiful sky. It feels intentional and balanced, and it gives the judge several things to respond to: light, atmosphere, layering, silhouette, and location.

Before submitting it, I would consider a few small refinements. I would check the highlights in the sun and surrounding clouds to recover any available detail. I would also consider a slight crop from the top or sides if it strengthens the placement of the sun and lighthouse. I would be careful not to over-saturate the orange tones, because the scene already has plenty of natural drama.

If the competition category favors storytelling or human interest, the kayak image could be a strong alternate choice. But if I had to choose one image for general competition impact, I would submit the lighthouse sunrise/sunset.

How We Use AI (Editorial Transparency)

We use AI tools—primarily ChatGPT—to assist with drafting and editing parts of this newsletter. PSRI editors set direction, fact-check, and approve all final text. We also use AI for grammar, clarity, and styling as needed.

Unless noted, all photographs are made by PSRI members. If AI is used to generate text or create/alter an image beyond standard edits, we label it clearly as such.

CEREAL CHAMPIONS!

April Cereal Challenge Overflows with Community Spirit

Warwick, RI — The April Cereal Challenge was a huge success. 1,291 boxes of cereal were collected to benefit Westbay Marketplace run by Westbay Community Action — all thanks to the incredible support of local businesses, faith communities, and generous individuals throughout the community.

Spearheaded by Lincoln Smith a member of Lakewood Baptist Church, the Cereal Challenge has become a tradition



focused on fighting food insecurity by stocking the shelves of Westbay Marketplace with kid-friendly, shelf-stable breakfast options.

This year's cereal challenge was made possible through the collaboration of many community partners, including Lakewood Baptist Church, Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Pawtuxet Baptist Church, Spring Green Memorial Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, **Photographic Society of RI**, VFW Post 183 and anyone else who donated cereal, gift cards and money given to Lincoln to shop for them.



“Every box collected is a small act of kindness that adds up to something truly powerful,” said Jordon Hiatt, Marketplace Supervisor. “These donations will go directly to families in need.”

Lakewood Baptist Church has proudly sponsored the spring challenge for six years running. Church member and Westbay volunteer Lincoln Smith reflected on the growing impact: To see more than 1,200 boxes come in from across the community is deeply moving. It shows what can happen when people unite for a common cause.

With shelves now fuller and spirits lifted, the team at Westbay Marketplace is already looking forward to next year's challenge — inspired by what this community can accomplish together. Together, we're fighting hunger one box at a time.

Lincoln Smith

LAUREN LAMBERT – Recipient of the 2026 Charles T. Miller Most Valuable Photographer Award

By Greg Kniseley

PSRI honored Lauren Lambert with the prestigious Charles T. Miller Most Valuable Photographer Award (CTM MVP) during the annual banquet on June 16, 2026. The award is one of the highest recognitions bestowed by the Photographic Society of Rhode Island and is presented only to members who embody the spirit, dedication, and leadership exemplified by Charles T. Miller himself. Since its establishment in 1997, only 22 members have received this distinguished honor.



or organizing field trips and meetups for photographers of all skill levels, Lauren consistently demonstrates the qualities that define a Charles T. Miller Award recipient.

In presenting the award, Deb Page, speaking on behalf of the selection committee, noted that Lauren exemplifies the six characteristics associated with

CTM MVP honorees: commitment to the art of photography, friendship, mentorship, inspiration, leadership, and service to PSRI and the photographic community. Through her quiet dedication and willingness to help others, Lauren has earned the respect and appreciation of fellow members throughout the organization.

Since becoming a PSRI member in 2015, Lauren has made significant contributions to the club. As Board Secretary, she provides clear, accurate, and timely meeting minutes that serve as an invaluable record for the organization.

As Meetups Chair, she has created opportunities for members to learn, explore, and photograph together at a wide variety of locations throughout southern New England. Her efforts have strengthened friendships within the club and encouraged members to share knowledge, techniques, and enthusiasm for photography.

“ Charlie was "the go to guy" of PSRI. There wasn't enough he could do for our organization. He was on multiple committees, Board of Directors, and President. Charlie was the welcoming person of PSRI. He always looked for new faces and introduced himself, and new people learn about the club. Michael Di Stefano

The selection committee recognized Lauren for her outstanding service to PSRI, her commitment to photography, and her ability to bring members together through meaningful educational and social experiences. Whether serving as Secretary of the Board of Directors

Some of Lauren's winning photographs



The Chase Across the Water
2nd Place 2026 Nature Competition #2



Reflections on the Providence River
1st Place 2026 Open Competition #3 2026

“...Lauren diligently takes notes at all Board of Directors meetings. She is extremely concise and accurate with her minutes of the meetings and her delivery of these minutes to the board. If anyone didn't remember what was discussed at a meeting, Lauren promptly let us all know what was discussed. The entire Board is grateful for her fine work and consistency.

Deb Page

Lauren's leadership reflects the legacy of Charles T. Miller, who was known for his generosity, mentorship, and unwavering dedication to PSRI. Like Charlie, Lauren is someone who works behind the scenes to make the organization stronger while helping fellow photographers feel welcome, engaged, and inspired.

Congratulations to Lauren Lambert on receiving the 2026 Charles T. Miller Most Valuable Photographer Award. The recognition is well deserved and reflects years of dedicated service, leadership, and commitment to both PSRI and the art of photography.

Lauren at Meetups



“ And Lauren has been the chair of the Meetups for PSRI for the last two years. I have been to some of the Meetups and I have to say that it's been a pleasure being in Lauren's company. The meetups have been well attended and enjoyed by many members of PSRI. Lauren is consistent in her efforts to go to places of different interest in attempts to satisfy different members. Most of all, Lauren's efforts have certainly increased the camaraderie in the PSRI membership and club.

Deb Page

(Footnotes):

- 2026 Award Selection Committee Members are Deb Page, Mike Di Stefano, and Karl Zuzarte.
- Click [HERE](#) to view images of Charlie's photography scanned by Ted Lawson and Cemal Ekin and posted on PSRI website by Dennis Goulet.
- Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Charles T. Miller - Most Valuable Photographer Award in Lincoln Smith's PSRI Flashback article in the March - April 2026 edition of In Focus.
- Photography credits: Lauren Lambert, Jacqui Nye, Deb Page, and Bernadette van der Vliet
- Editor's Note: Greg Kniseley drafted the article. Mike Di Stefano, Dennis Goulet, Deb Page, and Lincoln Smith provided information. The article was edited with the help of ChatGPT.



Lauren Lambert



Tom Backman



Lincoln Smith

MEETUP *at the* FISHING FLEET *OF* GALILEE

By Dave DeMarco PSRI gathered the evening of June 25th at the Fishing Fleet of Galilee for another fun and adventure-some meetup. We welcomed Diane at the meetup on her first day of being in the club. We had a leisurely stroll around the piers at the docks in Galilee. We made wonderful images of the lobster boats and commercial fishing vessels. Along the way we experimented with sun stars and things got interesting at sunset as the sky caught some amazing light, burning in front of us. Blue hour didn't disappoint as we made some rich vibrant images of the vessels that bring us the seafood we all love.



Dave DeMarco



Lauren Lambert



Tom Backman



Lincoln Smith

TRUSTOM POND MEETUP



By Bob Mattera Photography clubs like PSRI have long been a safe and effective means for people to gather, socialize, share photography ideas, and meet new people. Especially for people who may be new to an area. Our Trustom meetup was just that for Brittany Dymond Murray, a recent new member to PSRI. And it was another chance for roughly 10 members to get together. Jim Mutschler and I spent a fair amount of time wandering on our own, which was a great chance for us to get to know one another. We even had a couple of spouses along just for the walk about the grounds. And we managed to take a few pictures along the way.

Photos by Bob Arnold



What Photography Has Taught Me

by Mary Doo

We often hear that photography is about more than making photographs. But what does that really mean?

Some years ago, I attended a photography workshop led by landscape photographer Kerrick James to the Temple of the Sun and Moon in Utah. This spectacular place lies in a remote region of Capitol Reef National Park, accessible only by a rough dirt road. I remember vast sandstone formations, endless skies, and an isolation that made one feel very small in a very large world. I don't recall seeing another car or person for hours during the drive. We traveled with experienced outfitters in a heavy-duty vehicle, and they set up our tents in the desert. We felt well prepared. Or so we thought.

During the evening, an intense storm rolled in. The wind howled, and rain pounded the canvas. My tent shook violently from side to side despite being anchored on all corners by huge rocks. Everyone was anxious, if not frightened. Would the storm get worse? Would the tents survive? Were we in mortal danger?

As I lay there in anxiety, I suddenly remembered a story from my childhood Sunday school lessons. Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when a violent storm arose, threatening to sink their boat. While the disciples were beside themselves with panic, Jesus was fast asleep. Fearing for their lives, they woke him. And, after calming the wind and waves, Jesus turned to them and asked, "Do you still have no faith?"

Lying there in my shaking tent, that ancient story took on a practical, immediate meaning. The word that struck me was **still**. I imagined Jesus must be a bit disappointed with his disciples because, after witnessing his teachings, his miracles, and the sheer power of his presence, they still doubted. I began asking myself the same question: After all these years, and after many answered prayers, did I **still** have no faith?

For me, that night became an exercise in faith: I stopped overthinking. I committed the situation to God, let go of the need to manage the outcome, and tried to sleep. Miraculously, the motion of the tent and the sound of the rain rocked me to dreamland.

The next morning, I discovered that most of my fellow photographers had remained awake throughout the night. One worried about a flash flood; another's tent had collapsed. A few jokingly expressed outrage that I had managed to sleep through the chaos.



Temple of the Sun and Moon
Trust and Faith

What seemed threatening became unforgettable

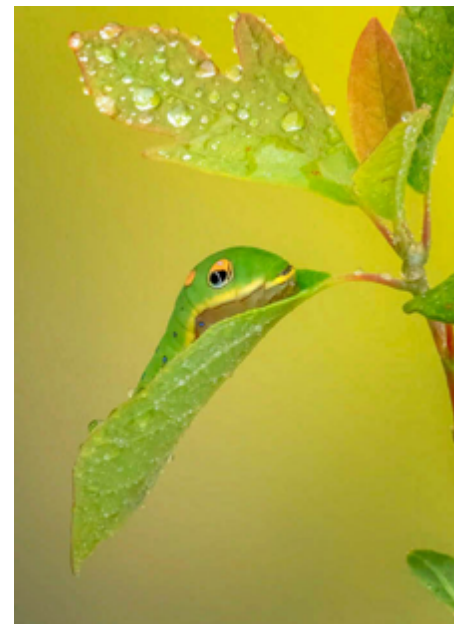
Looking back, this experience makes me reflect on another kind of uncertainty we face in photography all the time:

- Will the sunrise be beautiful?
- Will the wildlife appear?
- Will the fall foliage remain at peak colors?
- Will the flowers bloom at the right moment?
- Will the weather cooperate?
- Will this trip produce worthwhile images?

Many of us spend considerable energy worrying about outcomes we cannot control. Photography does require planning - we study weather forecasts, scout locations, research subjects, and prepare equipment. But there comes a point where preparation ends and trust begins. The most important lesson from

that night was about letting go of what I could not control.

Recently I have been trying to learn to be more present. I used to think of presence as simply paying attention. Now I think it means something deeper: becoming fully available to the moment instead of competing with it. Seeing each other, showing up for each other. Bringing out the best from each other. The world hasn't changed. But I think I have - or have I?



Spicebush Swallowtail Caterpillar
Being Present

We see when we slow down to observe

Now how does this relate to photography? When I am present, I try to notice not only the scene that surrounds me, but also my own emotional landscape. Instead of focusing on the one specific thing I hope to find - a preconceived image, I try to widen my awareness of the whole scene - light, color, texture, relationships, as many elements as I can see, and the atmosphere.

Photography has gradually been teaching me something that extends beyond making better images. Being present is not simply paying attention. It also means letting go of what competes for our attention—our expectations, our

plans, and even our desire to come home with a "winning" photograph.

As I continued thinking about this, I came across similar ideas in other traditions. In yoga, the principle of **Aparigraha** encourages us to loosen our grip on possessions, expectations, and outcomes. The Japanese expression **Ichigo Ichie** reminds us that every encounter happens only once and can never be repeated in exactly the same way. Although these ideas come from different cultures, they echo what photography has gradually been teaching me: when we stop obsessing over what we hope to find, we become more open to what is actually before us—and may discover something unexpectedly beautiful.

Perhaps that is one of photography's greatest gifts. Every sunrise, every bird in flight, every flower, every conversation, even every ordinary walk, is unique. We cannot repeat the moment; we can only receive and experience it. The camera becomes less a tool for collecting images and more a reminder to pay attention while the moment is still here.

Anxiety does the exact opposite; it narrows our vision. When I am preoccupied with a specific outcome, I become oblivious to what is actually happening around me. I remember missing a leopard lying on a tree stump until it was already leaving, an eagle perched on a branch until the moment it flew away, and the moon setting atop a Boston steeple until it was no longer perfectly aligned. I was simply not available at the moment.

When we worry about possible negatives, we fail to see the positives right in front of us. When I worry about "bad" weather, I can easily



Acceptance and Resilience

Beauty endures, even after a storm

forget how a storm could create extraordinary images and memories. When I worry about flowers or foliage not being in peak condition, I forget that their wilting can invite us to reflect on the bittersweet beauty of life's natural cycle.

When we let go of the need to control and allow our vision to widen, we begin to notice subtle relationships and nuances, unique compositions that we might otherwise overlook. This expanded awareness allows us to see interactions in nature, where subjects almost seem to have a "conscious" relationship with each other.



Relationship

Presence reveals connections we might otherwise miss



Showy Lady's Slipper (Buds)

Tenderness

How a flower bud can remind us of love's embrace

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to look again at Maria Zorn's exquisite images. As you probably know, I consider Maria one of the best macro photographers, as both her technique and artistry are unmatched. This time, I noticed just how fully "present" she

was in her work. She could see the most minute details, detecting specular highlights that I could not see even after she pointed them out, timing her compositions imperceptibly with the condition of the light.

My friend Janet, who was Maria's close friend, mentioned that Maria used to sketch out her planned images before actually taking the shot. This tells me that she beautifully balanced previsualization with being completely present for her photography when the moment arrived.

Some of my most memorable photographic experiences have occurred when I stopped chasing a result and simply became immersed in a place, a subject, or a moment. Looking back, I suspect that many of my favorite photographs were not the result of better technique or better equipment. They came from moments when I was simply fully there.



Delicate Arch, Utah

Awe

Completely present, I soaked in the wonder of the universe

The lesson I learned in that Utah storm and the practice of presence extend beautifully to our art. We cannot control the weather, the wildlife, the light, or the final outcomes. What we can control is our willingness to be present.

The older I get, the more I appreciate this simple truth: some of the best photographic experiences occur when we stop trying to force a result and instead immerse ourselves in the moment before us. Whether standing in a desert storm, waiting for dawn, or quietly observing a flower or insect in a garden, the waves in the ocean, the question remains the same: Can we let go of our anxiety long enough to truly see?

Horn Pond *MEETUP*

By Lauren Lambert Nestled in the heart of Woburn, Horn Pond provided the perfect backdrop for a PSRI wildlife meetup on May 16th. This beautiful natural pond, spanning around 100 acres along the Aberjona River, is surrounded by more than 500 acres of protected conservation land made up of wetlands, wooded trails, and open water habitats. The area teems with wildlife, making it a paradise for nature lovers and photographers alike. Throughout the day, we enjoyed photographing an elegant family of swans, mallard ducks - including a devoted mother guiding her tiny ducklings - cormorants diving in the water for fish, numerous sunbathing turtles, and a variety of birds, highlighted by the striking presence of a Great Blue Heron.

The peaceful atmosphere of Horn Pond made it easy to slow down and fully appreciate the beauty of nature, whether strolling along the scenic paths or simply sitting quietly on a bench overlooking the water. After leaving Horn Pond, the group had an unexpected treat of photographing a Peregrine Falcon sitting high up on a steep cliff in a nearby industrial park. Following a rewarding morning outdoors, the group continued the fellowship over a delicious lunch and lively conversation at Grassfields Restaurant in Waltham.



Lauren Lambert



Bob Arnold



Bob Arnold



Lauren Lambert

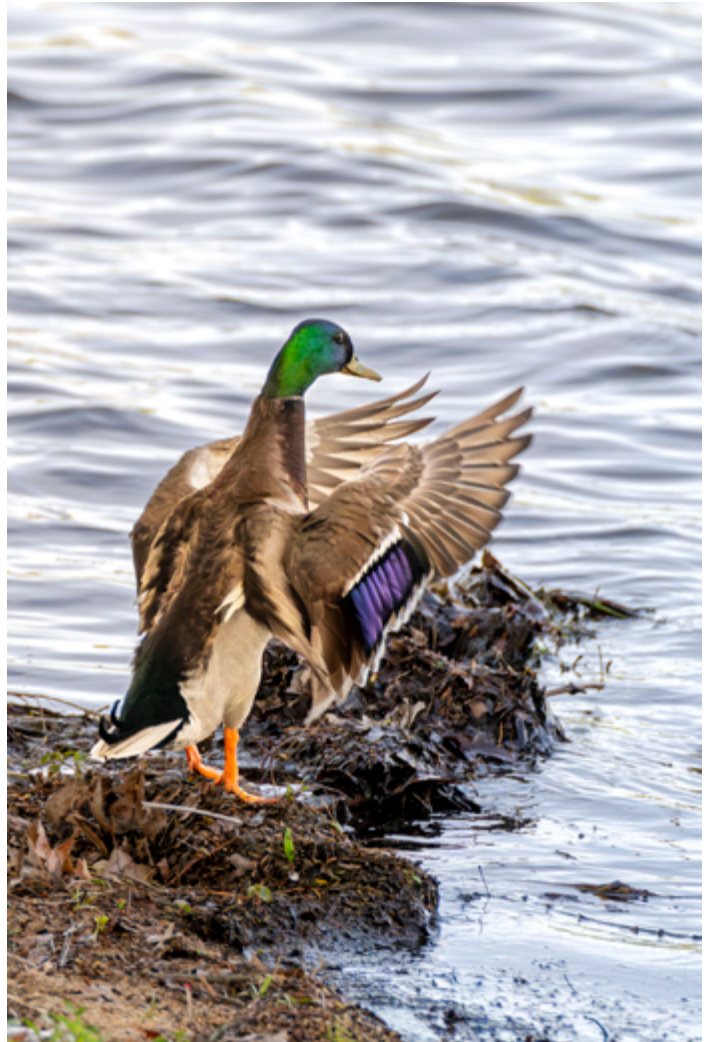


Lauren Lambert

Horn Pond meetup continued



Lauren Lambert



Bob Arnold



Lauren Lambert

Advertisement



WE NEED YOU!

We want to hear from you! Submit a favorite photo, recap of a recent workshop or photo trip, spread the word about an upcoming workshop, or share your favorite tips and tricks. The PSRI newsletter is your space to connect and inspire — reach out to us to contribute to the next issue! Email submissions to PSRI-newsletter@psri.us

Hunt's
PHOTO & VIDEO

huntsphoto.com

66 Branch Avenue
Providence, RI
(401) 751-5190

Special offer for PSRI Members
10% Discount on Accessories

**TRY
BEFORE
YOU
BUY!**



RENTALS

Photo & Video Gear

**PROVIDENCE IS A DELIVERY LOCATION NEEDING A
3 BUSINESS DAY NOTICE FOR RENTALS.*

PSRI Annual Dinner & Awards Night Photos



Bob Mattera



Bob Mattera



Bob Mattera



Bob Mattera





photo by Stan Skrabut



Photos by Bernadette van der Vliet unless otherwise noted.

PSRI

Copyright Notice

The copyrights for the photographs in this publication are owned by the individual photographers. Unauthorized use and/or duplication of this material or images/photographs without express and written permission from maker and/or owner is strictly prohibited. All remaining content is owned by the [Photographic Society of RI.](#)



Annual Business Meeting, June 2, 2026
Photo by Bernadette van der Vliet

Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs

Communications: Karen Johnson-Nieuwendijk psri-communications@psri.us

Digital Image Competition: Noreen Berthiaume digital@psri.us

Giving Back: Karen Johnson-Nieuwendijk

Historian: Lincoln Smith

Legal Counsel: Ted Lawson

Meetups: Chris Williamson psri-fieldtrips@psri.us

Membership: Bernadette van der Vliet psri-membership@psri.us

Men vs Women Competition: Tara Marshall

Newsletter: Bernadette van der Vliet PSRI-newsletter@psri.us

Nominating: Lincoln Smith

Print Competition: Tara Marshall psri-print@psri.us

Programming: Sue Babin and Bob Mattera psri-programs@psri.us

PSA, NECCC and NECCC Digital Representative: Mike Di Stefano

Refreshments: Jean Caputo and Doug Ray

Slide Competition: Mike Di Stefano

Student Activities: Mike Di Stefano psri-studentactivities@psri.us

Website: Dennis Goulet, Ian Chernasky, Tara Marshall, Bernadette van der Vliet, Chris Williamson admin-x234@psri.us

Welcoming: Doug Ray

Committee Members

Giving Back Committee: Karen Johnson, Doug Ray, Meredith Albright, Bob Arnold, Gene Whalen, Lorelei Ludovicz

Meetup Committee: Chris Williamson, Lauren Lambert, Kathy French, Christine Sovet, Helen Lambiase, Dave DeMarco, Noreen Berthiaume, Karl Zuzarte, Marjorie Lamphear

Membership Committee: Bernadette van der Vliet, Gene Whalen, Bob Mattera

Newsletter Committee: Bernadette van der Vliet, Mary Doo, Bob Mattera, Lincoln Smith, Mike Dooley

Nominating Committee: Lincoln Smith, Mike Di Stefano

Program Committee: Sue Babin, Bob Mattera, Karl Zuzarte, Marjorie Lamphear, Mike Di Stefano