

ViewFinder

Newsletter of the Syosset Camera Club —Spring, 2026



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Letter from the SCC President, Bonnie Forman-Franco

It's hard to believe, but we made it! The snow is gone (I hope), the days are longer, and our cameras are finally defrosted. Spring is here and it's time to get back outside, explore new perspectives, and capture the vibrant colors and energy that nature has to offer. Whether it's blooming flowers, capturing birds with newborns, or macro opportunities, spring is a photographer's playground..

I encourage each of you to take advantage of the changing season—try a new technique, visit a new location, or challenge yourself creatively. Our club thrives on the passion and participation of our members, and I for one look forward to seeing the images and inspiration this season brings. This is also an opportunity to invite members to join you on these photo expeditions and make new friends.

We have several important volunteer positions open which need filling for the upcoming camera club year. These roles are essential to keeping our club active, engaging and connected. I have asked before, and am asking again, please step up and be an integral part of our club.

PRESENTATION COORDINATOR ~ help organize and schedule guest speakers, workshops, and member presentations. Jessie will assist in any way possible for the person who is willing to take over this position.

FIRST VP ~ support the president and assist with overall club leadership. This position is a wonderful opportunity to take on a more active role in shaping the direction and success of the club.

SUNSHINE and SOCIAL COORDINATOR ~ Keep our club community strong by managing social events and recognizing member milestones, and celebrations.

FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR ~ I anticipate this position as a committee for which people can share this responsibility. This particular area of the club has a great deal of interest by the membership.

Volunteering is a rewarding way to connect with fellow members and help our club continue to grow. Step up or else these positions will be vacant and services that each provides will not be offered.

Before I end, please look for your invite to join our newly created club calendar which allows members to enter photo-opportunities. Everyone is encouraged to participate. Watch your emails for further information.

Warm Regards, Bonnie

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SYOSSET CAMERA CLUB EXCURSION

The Syosset Camera Club Goes Underground... — January 11, 2026

Review by *Jessie McGuire*

What a day! A group of intrepid SCCers braved the cold to explore old, seldom-used subway stations in Lower Manhattan. We had a great guide, Peter, from Untapped NYC, who led us brilliantly.

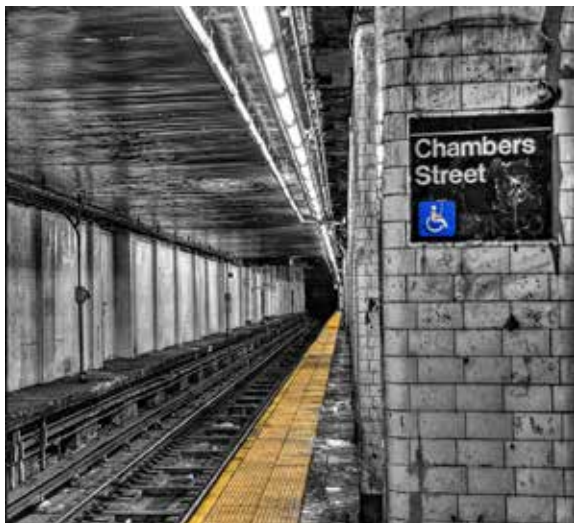
We saw, and learned, a lot. The subway system was established in 1904. We have the second oldest subway system in the world. Lots of what we see now we owe to the Budapest system, including what we call “subway tiles”. Yes, those popular white porcelain tiles really were originally fabricated just for subway stations.

Our MTA system was originally 3 different, competing systems: the IRT, the BMT and the IND. They had no connection with each other until economic woes in the 1940s caused all three to default to NYC managership, consolidation, and ownership. The best example of pulling the three together was where we started our journey, the Fulton Street Transit Center, which services the 2, 3, 4, 5, A, C, E, J, Z, R and W lines. Just as an aside, the rapper JZ often traveled on the J and Z lines, whence his name. Who knew? Anyway, the Fulton Street transit center was conceived after 9-11 wreaked havoc on the existing subway structure. It was finally completed in 2014 and is a building worth seeing. All three lines converged into one transit hub, a long sought-after goal. It’s a beauty of a building just about a block or two from the World Trade Center Memorial and the famed Oculus.

Then we started into the depths. Have you ever noticed the white line on those ubiquitous black subway signs? We all laughed when we were shown how the original line was designed to tell the installer where to attach the bracket. He goofed, put the bracket on top, and a white line became iconic throughout the entire MTA system. You’ll never look at one without chuckling again.



The day was filled with such stories. The Astor Place stop, for example, is adorned with beaver images on the tile wall. Why? John Jacob Astor made his money in fur trading, most prominently beaver, and they were an homage to him. And there are murals by the famed graphic artist Milton Glaser. (he designed the I♥NY logo, among many other designs). Milton Glaser attended Cooper Union, which is right above the Astor Place station. The stories abounded.



We capped off the day at the Oculus and enjoyed lunch on their “fourth floor”, which is not easy to find. Eataly for lunch, once you find it, is worth it. Eataly has the entire top floor and houses a bazillion Italian-themed take-out stands (with open seating in 2 or 3 areas of the floor) and/or a full-service restaurant. The area also houses independent vendors that sell anything Italian (porcelain, condiments, fish, wine, cheese, olives, pots, pans, and lots more). It’s a treasure! None of us could pass up the gelato on the way out and you shouldn’t either. It justifies you finding your way up to the 4th floor!

Thanks to Bonnie for a very informative, lots of fun, and enjoyable field trip. We missed those who couldn’t make it and are anxiously awaiting sharing the next one with all of you.

©*Valerie DeBiase*



©*Audrey Gallo*

SYOSSET CAMERA CLUB EXCURSION

A Riverhead Triple-Play Day! — March 24, 2026

Review by *Jessie McGuire*

If you weren't there, you missed a great day. It started with a Thursday evening Zoom presentation by Canadian Mat Coker on "Aquarium Photography". We all expected the usual info on gear, settings and exposure. But then Mat segued into composition, comparing aquarium photography to Vincent van Gogh's "Starry Night" and encouraging us to look at our aquarium setting and to compose our shots with an artist's eye. We were all hooked, so much so that we had



©Vincent Como



©Barry Goldstein

skills, we all made some new friends. It was a winner of a day. We had 2 1/2 hours in the aquarium, which is just about right if you're planning a similar adventure. Riverhead has the advantage of being an open hall with tanks around the edge. There's adequate space for everyone with no jostling and the lighting is good enough so you can check your settings. If you are



©Ellen Dunn

four more folks decide last minute to join our Tuesday jaunt.

What a group of pleasant, amazing people from 5 different local camera clubs! Everyone was responsible for checking that the person ahead of and behind them alphabetically was present, even though they may not have known that person. It beat counting to 33, but it also was refreshing to see participants at the meeting spot with paper in hand and introducing themselves. In addition to trying out our newly-acquired photography



©Bonnie Forman-Franco

planning your own aquarium trip, that's the one you want. Coney Island is nearby also, but not half as accessible for the photographer as Riverhead. Plus, Riverhead has a butterfly room with big, multi-colored butterflies just waiting to be photographed. Beauty everywhere you looked!

Paying homage to Riverhead's large Polish community, we met for lunch at The Birchwood of Polishtown. Who knew that one of our participants was an antiques fan! We all, but particularly Gabe Figueroa, enjoyed the old-world ambiance of

(Aquarium article continues on next page)

Riverhead Aquarium (Continued)



©Vincent Como



©Barry Goldstein



©Jessie McGuire



©Ellen Dunn

the restaurant. The day was even better than just good company, good food, a good German or Polish Pilsner beer for those who were indulging, and a very homey décor... we were also pleased to celebrate Ellen Gallagher's birthday with her. Again, a great day!

But then it got even better. We met a mile down the road at Snowflake, a stand whose homemade ice cream has won national awards. It doesn't get any tastier. We were all able to find a favorite or two among their wide offering. Delish. No better way to end the day! For those to whom it's an issue, we had a participant with allergies. The entire Snowflake staff knew exactly what worked for her. That's an unusual amount of care and expertise for someone "simply" scooping ice cream. Snowflake was impressive on many levels and well-worth a stop.

That's it. Any ideas for next year's adventure? Thanks to so many of you for joining us on this one.



Photo of members of the Photo Club, after our aquarium adventure

FILTERS

Do We Still Need Them?

Back in the day, some of us carried more filters than a barista in a coffee shop. Most filters are now obsolete because post-processing can achieve the same results. There are still some that you can't replace with Photoshop finesse, such as the UV filter they sold you when you bought the lens. The optical advantages of a UV filter is not exactly mind-blowing but it does protect the front element of the lens and it will improve clarity and contrast under foggy/hazy conditions. Note that if protecting the lens is your sole objective, there are less expensive lens protectors which are clear glass with no filtering function.

The ND (neutral density) filter is an irreplaceable tool for intentional motion blur or obtaining very shallow depth of field. It lengthens exposure under conditions where the camera is already set for its lowest ISO and smallest aperture. Many modern digital cameras include a built-in ND filter. Check your menu for it!

ND Filter Designations**Stops Method**

The classic naming system.

Each step doubles the light reduction.

ND2 = 1 stop, ND4 = 2 stops, ND8 = 3 stops,

Density Method

Every 0.3 = 1 stop of light reduction.

0.9 = 3 stops, 1.8 = 6 stops, etc.

A very useful modification of the ND is the split ND filter. Used mostly in landscape photography, it allows you to have different exposures for the sky and foreground. They come in a variety of densities. Having an assortment of ND filters can be a sizable investment as well as cumbersome to carry and use. The Variable ND Filter solves those problems. The Variable ND lets you adjust density simply by rotating its front element.

A less common filter is the **Infrared (IR)**; The IR filter passes light only in the infrared portion of the spectrum. It works best with an infrared converted camera but can produce a reasonable infrared look with a regular camera as well. IR filters are defined by their wavelength limit. The commonly used ones are the 610 nm which allows the most visible light, producing a strong false-color effects and vibrant foliage shifts. The 715 nm produces a classic IR look. Foliage becomes pale and skies darken significantly. If buying only one IR filter, this is the one to get. The 850 nm is the purest form. It passes almost no visible light producing deep black skies and white foliage. Finally, there is the 950nm which appears black to the eye. It produces the most contrast and requires long exposures.

A digital camera can be converted for infrared by removing the IR blocking filter from the sensor, though this is not a do it yourself job.

Now we come to the most useful filter of all. **The polarizer!** It eliminates reflections from metal, glass and water. It improves color saturation and contrast. You could always leave it on your lens except for the loss of 1-2 stops of light. It is important to note the difference between the polarizer in your desk

Filters article continues on next page

FILTERS: Do We Still Need Them? *(Continued)*

drawer since 1960 and what is required for today's cameras. Modern cameras require a circular polarizer (CPL). If you have an old one, make sure it is a CPL.

You may have noticed the vast range of prices for filters of the same size and type. B&H lists 72 mm circular polarizers from \$15.99 to \$379. Reading the descriptions will only offer hyperbole. So, what makes one better than another? Keep reading!

COATINGS Filter coatings are ultra-thin layers of material deposited on the glass to control how specific wavelengths of light are

transmitted, reflected, or blocked. Among the more than a dozen types of coating, the most important are MRC/Multi-Coating for prevention of flare, preservation of contrast and improved sharpness. Hydrophobic/Oleophobic Nano Coatings keep the filter clean and prevent scratches and neutrality coatings to prevent color shift. Prevention of color shift is especially important with polarizers and ND filters. Flare, an extreme case of surface reflection, is a major cause of flat images and poor sharpness.

GLASS Cheap filters are made with lime glass. That's a problem for two reasons; It is difficult to keep optically flat, and it absorbs some of the light that is supposed to be transmitted. Light absorption is most problematic at the blue end of the spectrum. High grade filters use Schott HT glass. This is a German proprietary glass used in the best filters, lenses and optical equipment, It has very little absorption, producing images with superior contrast and color fidelity. Because Schott glass absorbs less light, it is less prone to thermal refraction, a sharpness reducing culprit. Unlike high-quality filters with a monolithic structure, low-cost filters consist of filter material sandwiched between two glass pieces.

Tip

To prevent a filter from getting stuck, apply a very-very light coating of silicon grease to the threads before attaching.

CONSTRUCTION Cheap filters usually use Aluminum and sometimes plastic. The lightweight is desirable, but susceptible to cross-threading and thermal expansion, two factors that commonly result in a filter becoming stuck on the lens. The last thing you want to do is remove a filter with a pipe wrench! Magnesium is a better choice than plastic or aluminum, but brass is the best.

THICKNESS Thinner is better, especially for wide angle lenses which will display vignetting with a thick filter. Vignetting is a common problem when filters are stacked. Stacking raises the risk of internal reflections and ghosting.

For the traditionalists among us, there is the square filter system. This system uses filters commonly made of polycarbonate. They are available in a wide range of types and can be changed more rapidly than those that have to be screwed onto the lens. The filters are square and fit into a holder attached to the front of the lens. They are particularly useful for landscape photography because you can move a split ND filter up or down within the holder to align its density shift with the actual horizon. In addition, you can have endless fun experimenting with a large range of special effects filters.

I have made a case regarding the differences between the cheap filters you may find at Staples and the high-quality ones offered at camera stores. And yes, there is a reason to pay more, but how much more remains an open question. Hoya and Heliopan are always safe choices. You can maximize your investment by buying the size that fits your largest diameter lens and use step-down rings to adapt to smaller ones. A cheap filter can degrade a \$1,500 lens to the level of a kit lens. The better the quality of the lens, the more reasons to put a quality filter on it. A quality filter maintains your lens's performance, while a cheap filter reduces it.



With polarizing filter

Without polarizing filter



FOCUS STACKING

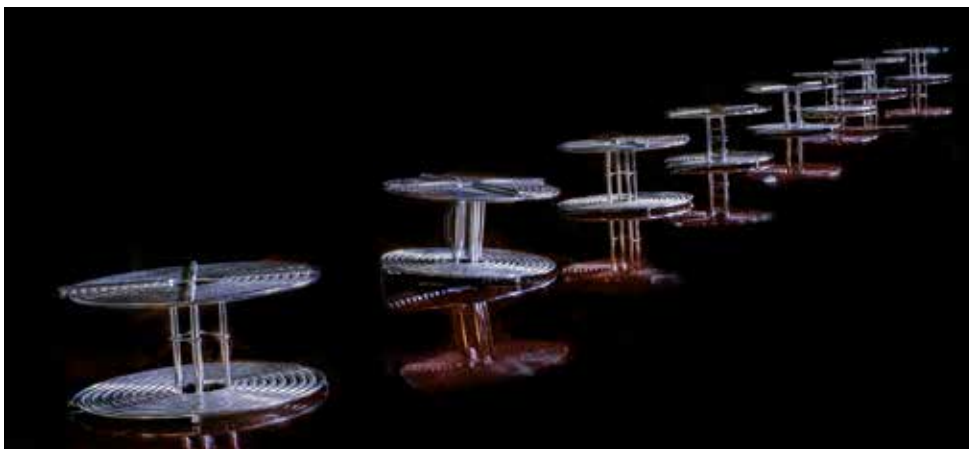
Thursday, February 12, the Syosset Camera Club hosted a presentation, on Zoom, where Maryland photographer Steve Stattler spoke on the topic of Focus Stacking. Kudos to Jessie McGuire who, in her capacity as Programs Director of the Club, thought Focus Stacking would be an interesting topic for one of her programs, and who found Steve, a terrific Maryland photographer, who specializes in subjects which benefit greatly from the technique. Jessie has done a wonderful job getting speakers on fascinating topics, and Steve's presentation was top-notch. Below are two of our SCC members who discuss their own exploration of focus stacking.

Paul Kelly

I've been focus stacking for over a year. Here is one of the images that I captured at last year's spring photorama. This is an image of a Colorado Blue Columbine and is comprised of 8 stacked photos to provide sharpness throughout the entire flower. I used my Nikon Z8 with an aperture of f/16, a shutter speed of 1/3 of a second, ISO 200, and a focal length of 115 mm. I processed the images using Helicon Focus then edited the final image in Lightroom Classic.



Barry Goldstein



The developing reels are arranged in a line 10 inches apart, 6.5 feet deep. There were 33 exposures with a 35mm lens @f8 with the camera 10 inches from the front reel.

How they Got the Shot continues on next page

How they Got the Shot: (Barry Goldstein) *Continued*

The flower is a stack of 12 exposures. I used a 60 mm lens, so the perspective is compressed. The plant is actually about 12-13 inches from front to back. The camera was handheld using the automatic function on my Fujifilm camera to advance the focus. Photoshop did a good job of aligning the frames to cancel the camera movement.



The clock mechanism photo was taken with the aid of a tripod.

The two pots of Mums were shot with a 35 mm lens on a tripod. To the best of my recollection, there were 10 exposures in the stack.





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PFLI SPRING PHOTORAMA

Sunday, April 26

Commimg Attraction article by Deborah Garafola

The 2026 Spring Photorama is on Sunday, April 26th from 9:30am to 3:00pm and sponsored by B&H Photo & Video. We will have Bobby Horvath from WINORR with his birds of prey, , raffles, and vintage cars (weather permitting). We will also have four new models. One of the models does cosplay and dresses up as comic book characters. We will also have setups to unleash your creativity for macro, closeup, and light pad photo opportunities. Back by popular demand is our water drop photography and a surprise by Mary Coleman!

This year we will have one urn for regular coffee and one urn for decaf coffee in addition to hot water for tea, as well as light refreshments and bottled water. If you plan on staying the whole day, you may want to bring your lunch. We have plenty of indoor and outdoor seating where you can relax, eat your lunch, socialize and exchange new ideas with fellow photographers.

We hope as many of you can come and join this PFLI fundraising event as it is both a photographic as well as a social event. Come join your fellow photographers for this exciting event with many photo opportunities. Don't forget to bring your favorite lenses for birds, models, and closeup photography as well as your tripod.

Save time and money! Tickets are available on Eventbrite at \$20.00 plus a \$3.18 processing fee, which comes with three raffle tickets. You can also purchase tickets at the door for \$25.00. Below is the Eventbrite link.

PFLI SPRING PHOTORAMA Tickets, Sunday, Apr 26 from 9:30 am to 3 pm | Eventbrite

Hope to see you all there for this fun filled day!



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SPRING SCC PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS

April 16	7:30 pm -9:30 pm	SCC Competition	Judge Scheduled is Valerie D'Aguanno	Zoom
April 23	7:30 pm -9:30 pm	SCC Critique		Zoom
April 26	9:00 am - 3:00 pm	PFLI Spring Photorama 2026 at Fireman's Park Pavillion		
May 07	7:30 pm - 9:00 pm	SCC Meeting	The Club House @ Haypath Road Park	
May 14	7:30 pm -9:30 pm	SCC Competition	Judge Scheduled is Michael Goodman	Zoom
May 21	7:30 pm -9:30 pm	SCC Presentation	Food Photography	Zoom
May 28	7:30 pm -9:30 pm	EOY Competition	The judges are: Lyn Morton, Meryl Meisler, and Frank Gallagher	Zoom
June 4	7:30 pm -9:30 pm	EOY Party	The Club House @ Haypath Road Park	

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Editorial, Design and Production by Lee Goldstein