

# Stockton Camera Club

**The Shutter Tripper**

**June 2021**

**May Image of the Month**



**Cactus Flower**

**Image of the Month - Doug Ridgway**

# May 10's



**Onion Bloom Buds  
About To Explode**  
Karleen Gansberg



**A Row of Lights**  
Sharon McLemore



**Close-up of a Blue Daisy**  
Joanne Sogsti





**Winter Post**  
Dean Taylor



**The Unfolding**  
Em McLaren



**Poppy Center**  
Sharon McLemore



**Chinese Lily**  
Elizabeth Parrish



**Elkhorn Creek, Idaho**  
Sharon McLemore



**Pulling My Truck  
With a Piece of Kelp  
at Pfeiffer Rock**  
Trey Steinhart



**Colors of Fall**  
Heide Stover

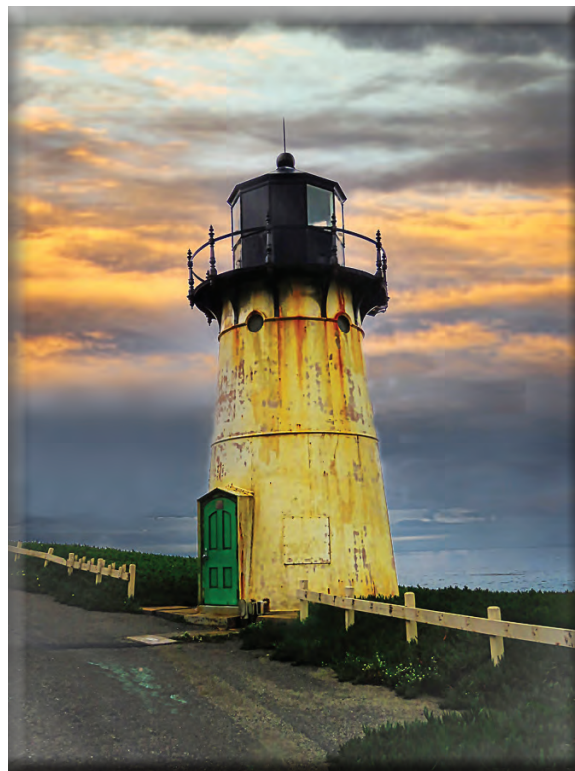




**Schools Out, Jerome, AZ**  
Sharon McLemore



**Worker Bee Pollinating  
the Blackberries**  
Ron Wetherell



**Light House Near Pacifica**  
Em McLaren

## SCC Officers 2021

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## President's Message

June 2021

By Heide Stover

I now know the difference between the Tetons and Yellowstone. About time!

In June we do have a special subject. June will be like a regular month with images only since we are still meeting by zoom. The special subject is Trains.

We do have some around here so I don't think it will be too hard to get one. There is a track that goes across Alpine Rd. East of West Lane, that I have seen trains on. There is a train near Costco in Lodi, I think Harney? A bridge goes over the track. There is a track that crosses Davis going towards Lodi. I am sure there are more than that but just some ideas for you.

Now with the vaccine out, and I think most of us are vaccinated, life should be a little easier. Bob and I are still playing it safe, wearing out masks and not getting into crowds, but we do feel safer having had both of our vaccines. I hope you are all feeling a bit safer as well and getting a chance to out and about a little more.

Think about our potluck in August. Trey is willing to have us at his home again.

Trey, we will be thinking of you going through your hip replacement. We wish you a speedy recovery.

See you all at the April 15th, 6:30pm meeting. Till then, keep shooting!

Heide

## A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!



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## 2021 Calendar of Events

Every 3rd Thursday (Except April, June & Aug) 6:30 PM	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	Membership Meeting Contact Heide Stover <a href="mailto:h1stover@aol.com">h1stover@aol.com</a>
Thursday June 17	Zoom Meeting Stockton	June General Meeting Special Subject - Trains
Thursday July 15	Zoom Meeting Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Creative
Thursday September 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	September General Meeting Special Subject - Textures
Thursday October 21	Zoom Meeting Stockton	October General Meeting Special Subject - Black & White/Monochrome
Thursday November 18	Zoom Meeting Stockton	November General Meeting Special Subject - Prints (if meeting) if not Open
Thursday December 18	Zoom Meeting Stockton	December General Meeting Special Subject - Trees

## 2022 Calendar of Events

Thursday January 20	Stockton	Annual Meeting/Banquet
Thursday February 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	February General Meeting Special Subject - Amore/Love
Thursday March 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	March General Meeting Special Subject - Prints (if meeting) if not Open
April	TBA	April Workshop/Photo Opportunity
Thursday May 19	Zoom Meeting Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Ice
Thursday June 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject)
Thursday July 21	Zoom Meeting Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Kids at Play

## May Meeting's Notes June 2021

Heide opened the meeting. There were 17 participants including the judge. There were 39 open images and 13 Special Subjects. The club PSA presentation will be on Saturday May 29th at 11AM. The topic will be on Black and White Photography. Don't forget to mark your calendar.

Heide called the bowling ally and was told it was open but the rooms won't be available for meetings until Aug.

We hope to have a potluck in Aug. Heide asked what do people want to do for that? Please let her know what ideas you have. Trey did volunteer his house again but he is having hip surgery on June 15th, so it will depend on how things go with that.

Doug mentioned that Moon Bows could be shot in Yosemite but you need reservations to get in. Also there will be a Super Moon on May 26th and also a Luna Eclipse.

Dean introduced Pat Rhames as judge this month. Pat is from the Fresno Camera Club and is also Travel Chairman for SJVCC. He is retired from the Fresno PD. His son was married in Ireland and he went to photograph the wedding and then Ireland and was hooked on photography. This is the first time he judged for our club. Dean said he is an excellent photographer and also does printing.

### COMPETITION WINNER FOR MAY:

"Cactus Flower" by Doug Ridgway - Congratulations Doug!

June is usually for Open subjects (June originally for Prints only) but this year it has been assigned a special subject of:

**TRAINS.**

Please let me know if there are any corrections or additions to the notes. Thanks, Em



**Stockton Camera Club**  
**May 2021 Competition Standings**

Please check out the website <http://www.stockton-cameraclub.com/home.html>

<b>Class A Standing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>
<b>Lanny Brown</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Class AA Standing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>
<b>Doug Ridgway</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Ron Wetherell</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Wayne Carlson</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Elizabeth Parrish</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Karleen Gansberg</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Sheldon McCormick</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Joan Erreca</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Christine Blue</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Darrell O'Sullivan</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Class AAA Standing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>DEC</b>
<b>Sharon McLemore</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Dean Taylor</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Heide Stover</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Joanne Sogsti</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Em McLaren</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Trey Steinhart</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

# 2021 Competition Policy

## A. GENERAL RULES

1. Only paid-up members may enter club competition.
2. Regular print and digital image competition period: Once each month except January. A competition year is February through December. Current regular meetings are February, March, May, July, September, October and December. The number of meetings may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and approval of the general membership as facilities permit. The Annual Awards Dinner will be held in January.
3. A total of four (4) images (all prints, all digital or a combination of both) may be entered each competition month. A total of three (3) images may be entered in the Open Division and a total of one (1) in the Special Subject Division. The number of entries may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the approval of the general membership.
4. Each image will be scored from 6 to 10 points. All prints or digital images receiving 9 or 10 points will be classed as an honor image. The title of each print or digital image entered will be read before being evaluated. The name of the maker will be read for 9-point honor winners. Maker's names will be announced for the 10 point images after the Print & Digital Image-of-the-Month winners are chosen.
5. A print or digital image that does not receive an honor score, may be re-entered one more time in the same division.
6. A print or digital image may be entered in all divisions for which it qualifies; i.e., an honor image in Open may also be entered in the Special Subject Division at another competition. A print or digital image that receives an honor score may not be re-entered in the same division.
7. Any print or digital image that appears to be ineligible for competition or not qualified for a specific division could expect to be challenged. The Competition Vice-President shall decide whether or not the image is acceptable.
8. The exhibitor must have exposed each negative, slide or digital image entered. All images submitted for judging must be the work of the photographer/maker including the taking of the images and any digital enhancements and/or manipulation of the image. This does not apply to the processing of film or printing by a commercial processor.
9. The same image should not be entered both as a print and a projected digital image in the same competition.
10. In the event of absence or barring unforeseen circumstances, a member may submit make-up prints or digital images for one competition night per competition year; and whenever possible must submit all make-up prints or digital images at the meeting immediately following the month a member failed or was unable to submit the prints or digital images. Make-ups in the Special Subject Division must be the same subject as the month missed. Also, in case of absence a member may assign the responsibility of submitting his or her prints and/or digital images for competition to another member.
11. A club member who serves as judge cannot enter his or her own prints or digital images in the same competition. The judge's make-up prints or digital images can then be entered in another competition during that competition year. This is in addition to the once-a-year make-up provision already

allowed.

12. Prints or digital images may be projected/viewed briefly before the judging of each division if the judge indicates he/she would like a preview.

## B. PRINT ENTRY RULES

1. Each print entered must have a completed label attached to the back of the print including; name of maker, title, date entered and Division (Open or Special Subject). The writing or printing on the form must be legible. Labels must be attached on the back of the print in the upper left-hand corner for correct viewing of the print.
2. All prints must be matted or mounted with a total size (including mat board) of no larger than 18" X 24" and no smaller than 8" X 10". Exception: One side of a Panorama Print may be no larger than 36". Prints that are smaller than 5" X 7" will not be accepted. The maker's name must not appear on the viewing surface of the image. Framed prints shall not be entered.
3. Prints accompanied by entry forms should be submitted no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting.
4. Prints receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Print-of-the-Month honors. Print-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

## C. DIGITAL IMAGE ENTRY RULES

1. Digital images must be submitted in a format and by the deadline specified by the Competition Vice-President. Digital images may be submitted by email, mailed (CD) or delivered (CD) to the Competition Vice-President. Definition of Digital Image: An image taken with a digital camera, a negative, slide or print scanned into the computer and processed digitally.
2. Images must be in a format compatible with the projector. The key thing to keep in mind when formatting photos for submission is that the projector we use in the competition has a (maximum) resolution of 1400 x 1050 pixels. This means that any photo that exceeds this size in either dimension, could end-up being cropped by the projector. In other words: the image width cannot be more than 1400 pixels and the image height cannot be more than 1050 pixels. If your image is horizontal, only change the width to 1400, if your image is vertical, only change the height to 1050. Do not change both. Down-sizing the image from the "native" resolution coming out of your camera also significantly reduces the file size. This helps when emailing the files and takes-up less space on our hard-drives.
3. The maker's name, title of image, date entered and division (Open or Special Subject) must be included as the title of the image. When you have finished re-sizing your image save your image with a new title. For example do a Save as: Smith Sunrise Splendor 05-15 O.jpeg. (O-Open or SS-Special Subject). Specify whether you're Beginner, Advanced or Very Advanced.
4. Digital Images receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Digital Image-of-the-Month honors. Digital Image-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.



## 15 Tips for Better Train and Railroad Photos

By [Todd Vorenkamp](#)



Above photograph © Matthew Malkiewicz

For many photographers, the lure of a machine is an addictive draw to the camera and lens. Airplanes, cars, trucks, tractors, wristwatches, cameras, super colliders, and factory machinery are the subject of many photographs around the world. And, for a small group of passionate photographers, the appeal of photographing railroads is forever intoxicating. Locomotives, commuter trains, subways, and railway landscapes come together to create visual poetry that blends nature and man-made landscapes, as well as the human love for complex machinery.

[Dennis Livesey](#), who works at B&H and is a railfan photographer, put me in touch with a small and tight-knit community of superb railroad photographers. I asked them, as well as railroad photographer and art-school classmate [Wizzy Strom](#), for tips on how to improve one's railroad photography.

Before we dive into the tips, let's start with the most important tip.

### 1. Safety

When it comes to railroads photography (or any photography at all), SAFETY IS FIRST. Photographing trains or standing near active train tracks can be dangerous. This article discusses photographing trains, but the danger is plainly illustrated in the recent trend of using rails as leading lines in selfies and portraits, which has led to the death of many photographers in the past few years.

"Only cross train tracks in designated areas, and remember that trains can come in any direction at any time. Even if you 'know the schedule,' trains can be late, there can be work trains, or there can be other non-scheduled trains (deadheads, moving the train cars from one point to another without passengers). You should never walk 'in the gauge' (in the middle of the tracks), or photograph subjects there (we don't like that trend of school portraits on the tracks). As a person who works in the railroad industry, it is depressing to hear of the trespassers killed daily by trains," says [Emily Elizabeth Moser](#), a photographer who works in the railroad industry. Livesey recommends a 12' safety buffer between you and the tracks and Strom adds, "Stay off live tracks. Do not be tempted to step in-between those shiny rails to get a better shot. It can be a deadly mistake."

[Photographer Safety Tips from Operation Lifesaver](#)—Rail Safety Education

Operation Lifesaver, the nonprofit rail safety education organization, urges professional photographers to refrain from taking photos of high school seniors, wedding parties, and other subjects on train tracks or trestles.



Dennis Livesey

Here are Operation Lifesaver's six "must-know" facts for professional photographers considering a photo shoot near the tracks:

1. Trains can't stop quickly to avoid people or vehicles on the tracks.
2. An optical illusion makes it hard to determine a train's distance from you—and its speed.
3. The average train overhangs the track by at least three feet.
4. Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and rights-of-way are private property.
5. No tracks should be assumed to be abandoned or inactive.
6. People mimic your behavior when they see your photos on the Web and social media.



Now that we have that out of the way, here is a fantastic introduction to our railroad photography tips from Dennis Livesey.

"Photographing trains is a particular, (some would say peculiar) form of photography. You must have the skills of a landscape shooter with attendant great concern for light, weather, and composition, then also have knowledge like a wildlife/birder shooter who know where the animal lives but combined this all with the chops of a sports/action shooter who knows the camera's capabilities cold so that when that split second presents itself, you are ready. Remember, you are composing for something that is not there, something that will not stop for a second take, and something that can kill you if you are too close."



Wizzy Strom

## 2. The "Wedgie"

From Dennis Livesey: "Like with a musical instrument where you learn scales, you have to learn the basic building block of railroad photography first. We call it the 'wedgie.' This shot is accomplished by standing near the track, pointing the camera toward the oncoming train, seeing the complete front and most, if not all, of the rest of the train in frame. This  $\frac{3}{4}$  angle or 'wedge of pie' is where the term 'wedgie' comes from."



Robin Coombes

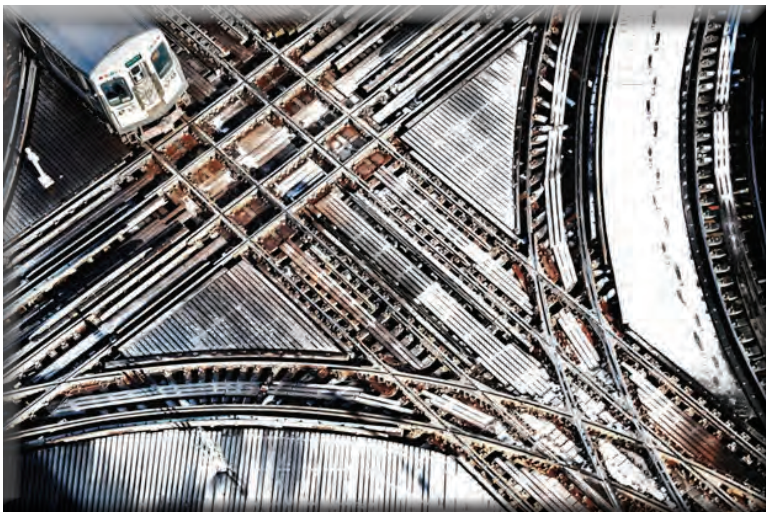
Livesey recommends the sun behind your back, zero obstructions between the camera and the train, and to also keep an eye out for structures and other things that may cast shadows onto the train as it passes. The front of the train—Livesey specifies the number board on the locomotive—should be in focus. He says you can manually focus on that point before the train arrives, but today's autofocus systems might be fast enough to keep up with a speeding train. Also recommended is at least 1/500-second shutter speed and a rule of thirds composition for the locomotive.



Dennis Livesey

"While all of this seems obvious, it is not as easy as it sounds. When that huge mechanical monster bears down on you, you may be thinking more about survival than holding a camera and pressing a button," says Livesey. "What a rush! Congratulations! You have made your first wedgie."





Robin Coombes

### 3. Scouting

"Scouting out locations is a big key to getting the best images possible," says Wizzy Strom. Like many forms of landscape photography, location can make your images stand out from the others. Strom continues, "While shooting the images, try every angle possible that can be used. Instead of using a spot where other photographers may be, look for another unique spot where you can get a different picture, whether it is a change in angle or scenery. It may require additional effort, such as off-road vehicles with four-wheel drive to get to alternate locations. If necessary, seek permission from the owner of the property if the location is on private property. In most cases it is fruitless to seek permission to be near the tracks from the train corporation. It is always a negative response due to safety reasons. I do not encourage anyone to trespass on railroad property; it is against the law and comes with very steep fines."



Matthew Malkiewicz



Matthew Malkiewicz

Strom adds: "Part of the thrill of taking images of trains is the chase involved in getting ahead of them and set up in time for your next photo shoot."



Robin Coombes

[George Hiotis](#) scouts with the calendar in mind, being aware that "some subjects are good summer shots, others are best in winter" due to the angle of the sun for a given time of day.

### 4. Timing

When the train is in motion and the lighting is favorable, timing is everything. English rail photographer Robin Coombes and his son Taliesin shoot the rails in the U.K. and around the world. Coombes states, "The trick, if there is one, is to stand in the right spot at the right time. It was a lesson learnt long ago that the difference between a master shot and an also-ran shot can be as little as six inches (150mm). You must remember there are 360 degrees of angle in the horizontal plane from which you can shoot a static object. There are another 180 degrees in the vertical plain. Plus, for a train, the object is moving, so in any given location, there are literally billions of possible



Robin Coombes



positions. Fortunately, limited access and obstacles will cut down the options, but never believe the guy who says, "There is only one position at a certain time of the day." He adds, "Most of the shots I take are actually taken in my mind's eye, days or even years before they are shot."



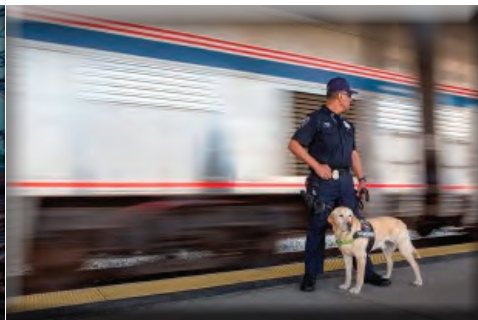
Robin Coombes

## 5. Shutter Speed

When photographing things in motion, the photographer has to make a decision to freeze the action with a fast shutter speed, or slow the shutter to allow for motion blur. Trains, of course, are no different.

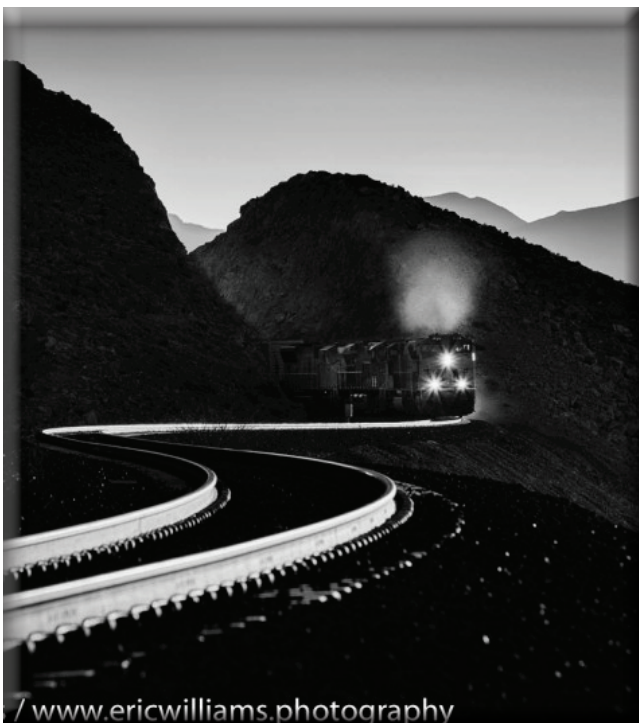
"Pay attention to your shutter speed. Decide what look are you trying to go for—do you want the train (or the scenery, if you are on a train) frozen in place? Or do you want to convey the motion of the train and have it blurred? If you want an extreme blur, you may need a tripod. Just make sure that if you choose to go for a blur, the effect is exaggerated enough that it looks intentional. The effect often looks better if you're taking a picture of the side of the train—if you capture a train with the front of it slightly blurred, it may just appear that

you didn't select a fast enough shutter," says Moser.



Emily Elizabeth Moser

Shutter speed changes the aesthetic of rail photos. Photos from a tripod, handheld, and from a moving car.



Eric Williams

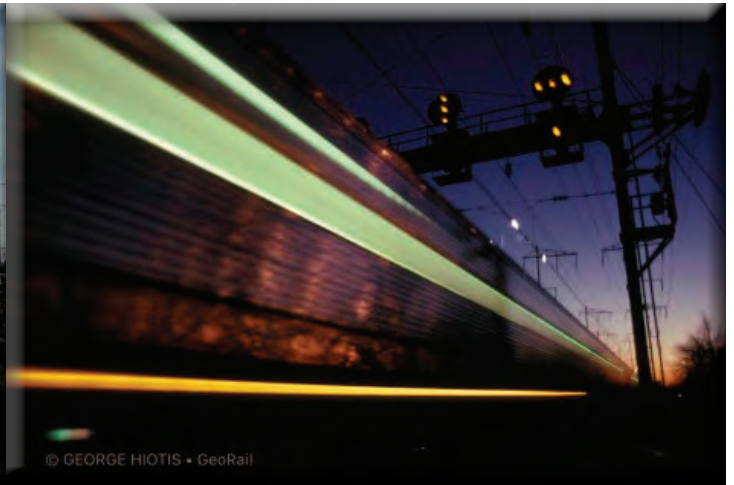
## 6. Tripod

Rail photographer [Eric Williams](#) admits to getting excited and losing his compositional ideas when the train approaches. "Use a tripod and predetermine where you want the train. Having the camera on a tripod allows me to visually follow the train without worrying about breaking my composition," he says.





George Hiotis

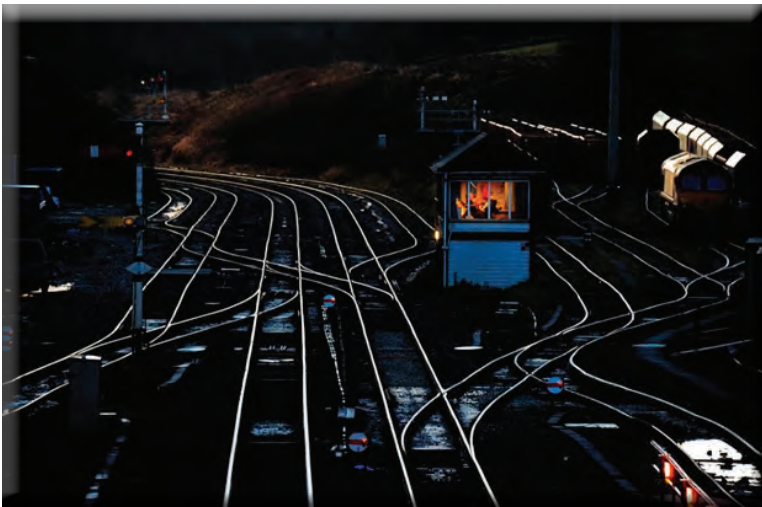


George Hiotis

## 7. Angles

Shooting wide-angle lenses low to the ground (or rails) really lends itself to dramatic train photos. Again, be extremely careful working in close proximity to the rails. Hiotis says, "Turn what might have been an ordinary photograph into an interesting picture by going low and wide. Low afternoon sidelight and motion blur work to good effect [for these images]." He even uses a right-angle viewfinder to help aid in the compositions when working at ground level.

Low and wide works well for trains. "A slow shutter speed emphasizes speed, a wide-angle lens emphasizes the length of the train, a low angle emphasizes its size," says George Hiotis.



Robin Coombes

## 8. Lines

No, I am not talking about the cliché, very overdone, and very dangerous use of tracks for leading/vanishing line portraits.

Responsible rail photographers can use this visual for their rail photos. Tracks create strong leading lines as does some rolling stock, and this can be used for dramatic effect.

George Hiotis says, "[This image is] illustrative of a technique which can be used in other places. The picture elements and blur all lead to a central vanishing point to which the eye is drawn."



George Hiotis



## 9. Light

Light is a crucial element in any photography, but some extra thought can help improve your rail images. Emily Elizabeth Moser says, "Because trains run on tracks in generally expected ways, you can usually research in advance good places to photograph trains, and where the light will fall at certain times of the day. I like to use SunCalc.org, but there are many sites and apps that perform the same function. Even if you don't plan in advance, pay attention to the angle of the sun, and make sure to shoot in such a way that your subject will be covered in the sun's rays. Sometimes you'll have to make adjustments, like taking a picture of the side of the train, if you know that the front of it will be in shadow."



"Usually it is preferred to take photos of the front of the train, as opposed to the rear—but in this case the light is better for capturing the rear."

Emily Elizabeth Moser

George Hiotis likes to use low back-sidelight for a dramatic effect saying, "Reflective surfaces such as railroad cars, rails, and overhead catenary wires will really glow in this lighting situation."

George Hiotis

## 10. Details

The rails, and railcars, are often surrounded by unique infrastructure. From Eric Williams: "Look for details. Most photographers go for the big picture and include most of the train and landscape. This is great, but there are wonderful details that can add depth to the story of railroading."



Eric Williams





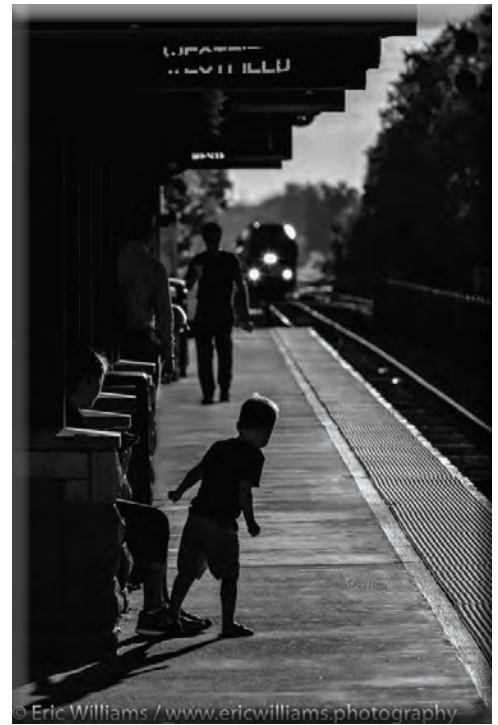
George Hiotis

## 11. People

George Hiotis says that "railroading is more than engines and cars: it's people, track, stations, and the surroundings, and it's about those who work on them and those who admire them. Some great rail pictures don't even contain a train."

"In Portland, Oregon, a boy draws his favorite subject. He is totally absorbed and doesn't mind the camera. I squeezed behind him with a wide-angle lens to emphasize the foreground. The white paper acts as a fill-light reflector, and the soft light of a cloudy day is ideal for this situation."

Eric Williams adds his take on the subject: "While it can be a challenge in these days of restricted access, I try to find ways to add the

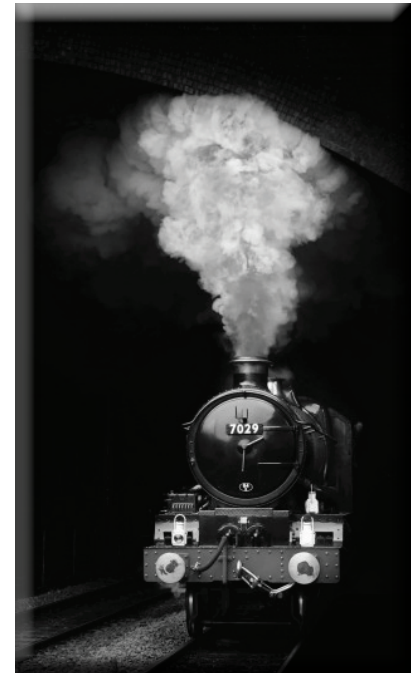


Eric Williams

train crew and provide the often overlooked human element. Train passengers are also part of the railroad story can often be more accessible—especially in urban areas."



Robin Coombes



Robin Coombes

## 12. Steam

Steam locomotion used to be the norm, but today, finding steam trains with dramatic smoke pouring from their stacks is a rarity. U.K. steam enthusiast Robin Coombes has the following tips for steam trains:

- Cold conditions are advantageous because the amount of condensed steam is directly proportional to temperature. At more than 60°F (15°C) you see very little, other than high pressure steam from a lifting safety valve.
- You see the most steam when the locomotive is working hard, so either just starting off, or working up a gradient.
- Steam looks best in dramatic lighting or weather—from low winter sun to a thunderstorm.





Matthew Malkiewicz

### **13. Personal Concepts**

Sometimes, having a deeper-than-postcard concept for your railroad imagery can help focus you, and your images. George Hiotis encourages the newcomer to rail photography to "think about what you want from your railroad photography" and think about what draws you, as a photographer, to photograph rails in the first place. He continues, "Then think about how you will interpret attraction. For instance, if trains impress you because they are fast, let them blur. If locomotives impress you because of their size, use a low angle to emphasize their presence."



Robin Coombes

### **14. Study the Masters**

Many in the railfan photography community agree that there have been some masters of the craft. Richard Virgil Dean Steinheimer, O. Winston Link, Jim Shaughnessy, Philips R. Hastings, Robert O. Hale, and Ted Benson are legendary photographers in the railroad community. And, from my perspective, their work stands on the same level as great photographers from any other genre of photography. Studying their images is a must for any fan of railroad photography. Robin Coombes admits, "Based on looking at the published works of the great railroad photographers, often late into the night with a torch under the bedclothes when I should have been fast asleep. Some of this must have stayed with me and when about 15 years ago I had the chance to take up photography as a hobby it was natural, I would be taking railways photographs."

Rail photographer [Matthew Malkiewicz](#) says, "Study the works of fellow photographers, both colleagues and strangers. The ones who are consistently stepping out of their comfort zone, pushing the envelope to freeze in time what their mind's vision sees. Make mental notes of what appeals to your tastes and what does not. Mold it into your own style." He adds, "Always shoot first and foremost for yourself. Have outside influences on your brand but don't emulate others."



Robin Coombes

## 15. Create New

There is a rich history to this genre of photography, but modern railfan photographers are constantly pushing themselves to create new and beautiful images. George Hiotis provides this wisdom: "Be a creator. Everyone knows what a train looks like; show us something new that only you can capture."

Robin Coombes shares this experience from the early days of his train photography: "When I started railway photography, my aim was to get one photo published in a magazine. I rang up the magazine, Steam Railway, and asked for advice. The answer was simple and straightforward: 'Make it different, we get thousands of technically good shots at ¾ angles and nicely lit, but they are all so similar and boring.'"

He continues, "My recommendation is to visit a heritage railway, visit your local railway station or some vantage point along the railway and first sit back and look and watch and think. Go at different times of the day, in different weathers. Look on the Internet at what others have done. Ask yourself, how did they do that, why did they do it, could I do it, how would do it, could I do better?"

More inspiration:

<http://www.railphoto-art.org/>

<https://www.railpictures.net>

[https://www.flickr.com/groups/train\\_photography/pool/](https://www.flickr.com/groups/train_photography/pool/)

Are you a fan of rail photography? Do you have some tips you'd like to add or questions for these modern masters of the craft? Let us know in the Comments section, below!

And, as an additional treat for all you railroad photography enthusiasts, you can read more and listen to the [B&H Photography podcast](#) about the "Golden Spike" and some gripping chat with some very talented railroad photographers.

Robin Coombes



Robin Coombes