



the Galleon



The Santa Maria Camera Club Newsletter February 2026

President's Message

What a wonderful Awards Reception on January 24 at Lake Marie Valley Club because of all of you! It took a village to put it on, just as it takes all of us to make Santa Maria Camera Club the formidable group it is.

Thank you to Rosie Brancacio for taking charge of the decorations; to Frank Tromp, Janine Bognuda, Joyce and Glenn Bolivar, Dian Thomsen, Penni Powell and Ken Hough for setting up the room; Janine for taking reservations; Penni for conducting People's Choice Awards; Greg Doudna for handling the projection of images and creation of certificates; and to Heidi Gruetzemacher and Flavio Parigi for taking event photos. Thanks also to Harold Litwiler for getting the judge; Elaine Calvert and Penni for reading the judge's comments; Alan Upshaw for collecting membership dues; Roy Reed for providing door prizes; Annika Ringer for drawing the door prize winners; and everyone for bringing refreshments, making merriment, and helping clean up.

Congratulations to Jim McKinniss for winning Photographer of the Year! His images always impress the judges. High Points in Monochrome also went to Jim. High Points in Color went to Janine Bognuda. Congratulations Janine!

A huge thank you to Elaine Calvert for her dedication as Vice President the past two years, bringing us wonderful programs and filling in for me when I could not make meetings. It was my honor to give Elaine the Shepard Award this year.

There were several other awards, which you can find elsewhere on the Galleon or online.

Thank you to the 2026 board members. Serving with me are Heidi Gruetzemacher, V.P.; Frank Tromp, Secretary; Alan Upshaw, Treasurer; Members-at-large Jim McKinniss, Dian Thomsen, Nyla James, Penni Powell, Harold Litwiler and Flavio Parigi.

Thanks to Greg for handling the competitions and website; Penni and Elaine for assisting with the competitions; Harold for getting the judges; Dian for opening the door for us at Merrill Gardens; Penni for planning field trips; Rosie for coordinating refreshments and decorations; Flavio for editing the Galleon, tracking competition points and getting pizza for our Pizza Parties; Heidi for organizing the programs this year and doing outreach; Alan for being the treasurer; Frank for being the secretary; and Nyla for keeping the historical records. Thanks to my husband Ken for being so supportive of me, helping with the club when needed and encouraging me to pursue my passion for photography.

All members step up in some way, from showing up, to bringing refreshments, to making guests feel welcome, or entering your photos in competitions, or going on field trips, or participating in discussions! You all contribute to this wonderful club, which feels like family to me. You all feel the same – so here is to another wonderful year!

May you find the image you seek!

Best,
Jeanne Sparks

2026 SMCC dues are due!

Individual Membership: \$35

Family Membership: \$50

Competition Dues (*per member, including each person in a family membership*): \$30.

Make checks payable to: Santa Maria Camera Club

Please mail your check to me, Alan, or give it to me at any in-person meeting or event.
The next in-person opportunity will be at the February 4 meeting, at Merrill Gardens.

***Dues need to be paid by the end of February to be able to participate in competitions!**

Alan

Message from Adi Ringer

Photography Tour Updates:

- Costa Rica May 7-15, 2026: 3 spots available. This is Resplendent Quetzal's nesting season; you do not want to miss it!
- Tanzania Feb 1-10, 2027: 3 spots left. Come on safari with me while we explore the Serengeti during calving season!
- Costa Rica April 22-30, 2027: 3 spots left. If you cannot make it this year, here is your chance for next year 😊

Full details at adi@adiringer.com or contact me 8056105527

I spend 95% of my pay on camera gear...
The other 5% I waste.



2025 awards

High points award Color



Rosie Brancacio

High points award Color



Jeanine Bognuda

Photographer of the year



Jim McKinnis

High points monochrome.



Nyla James

High points monochrome.



Jim McKinniss

People choice



Jeanine Bognuda

Shepard award

Elaine Calvert



Officers and at-large board

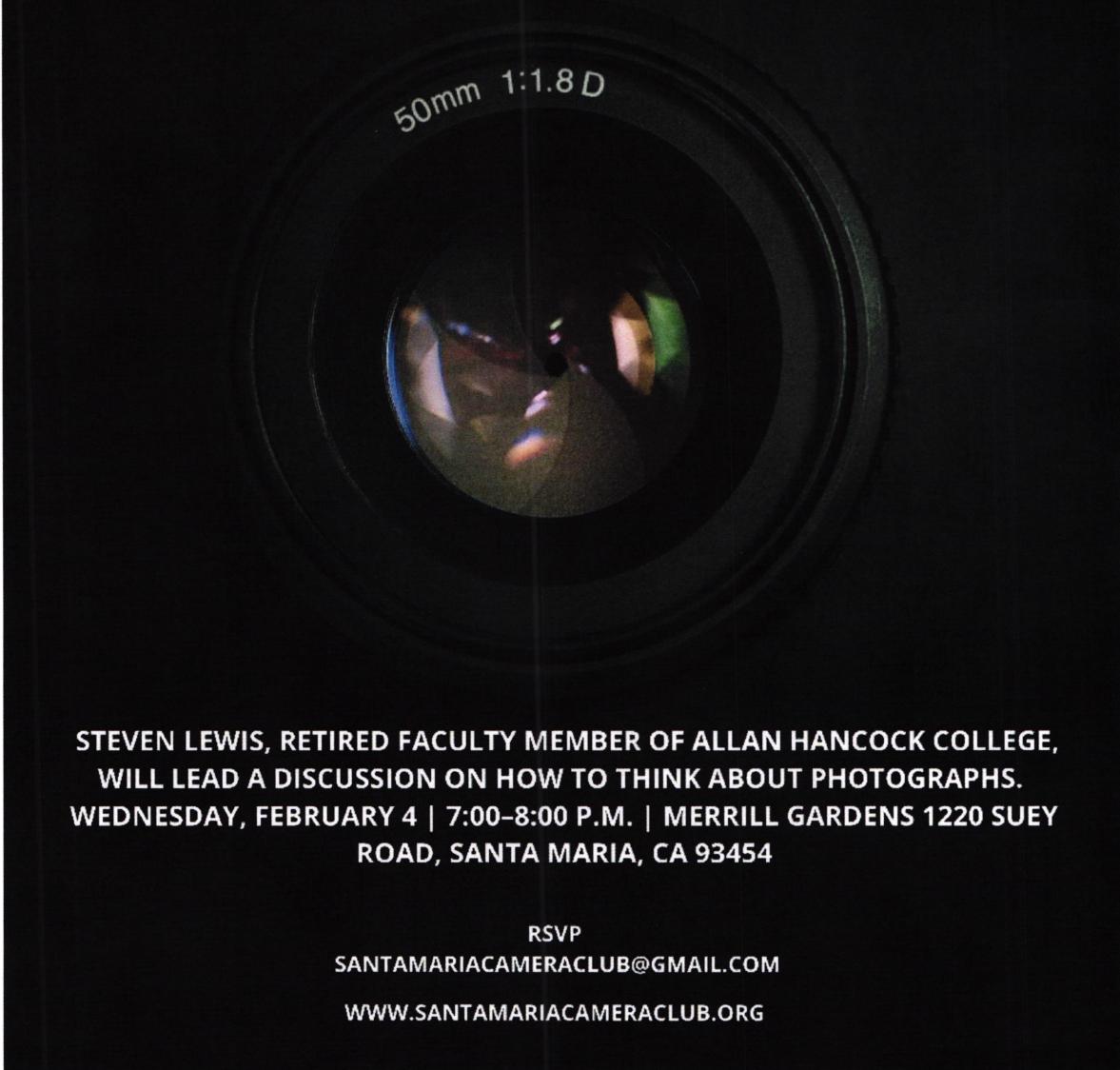
Members of 2026



Santa Maria Camera Club

WELCOMES
STEVEN LEWIS
ON

“HOW TO THINK ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHS”



STEVEN LEWIS, RETIRED FACULTY MEMBER OF ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE,
WILL LEAD A DISCUSSION ON HOW TO THINK ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHS.
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 | 7:00–8:00 P.M. | MERRILL GARDENS 1220 SUEY
ROAD, SANTA MARIA, CA 93454

RSVP
SANTAMARIACAMERA CLUB@GMAIL.COM
WWW.SANTAMARIACAMERA CLUB.ORG

JANUARY COMPETITION RESULT

Judge: Judi Richins

Digital Monochrome

1ST PLACE	Baking profession	Harold Litwiler
2ND PLACE	Urban cliff dwelling	Ed E Powell
3RD PLACE	Taxi ride 39 th street west	Jim McKinniss

Grogory Doudna

Digital color

1ST PLACE	It is mine	Jeanine Bognuda
2ND PLACE	Beauty in the Harshness	Jeanine Bognuda
3RD PLACE	Two heads are netter than one	Jeanne Sparks
HONORABLE MENTION	Ode to Monet's garden	Elaine Calvert
HONORABLE MENTION	Unfinished business	Ed E Powell

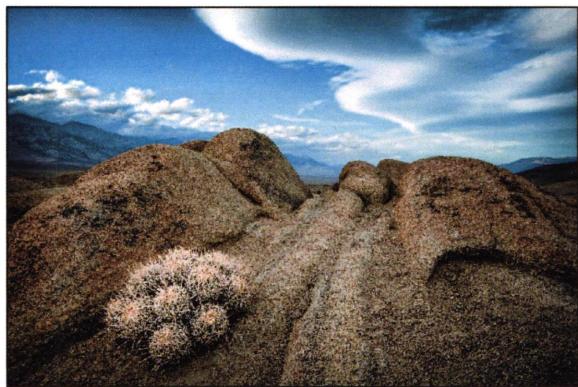
Congratulation to everyone



Jeanine Bognuda



Harold Litwiller



By Jeanine Bognuda



By Ed E Powell



By Jeanne Sparks



By Jim McKinniss



By Elaine Calvert



By Ed E Powell

SMCC Field Trips for February 2026 by Penni Powell

Please note: Bad weather can cancel outdoor activities. Contact the leader if you are in doubt. Check your email for any updates.

Feb 21st (Sat 7:30am – afternoon?) – Carrizo Plains and Painted Rock Hike Have you wondered what the Carrizo Plains are like after the Madre Fire (July 2025) burned in the monument? Are you interested in prehistoric rock art? LET'S GO! Meet at Starbuck's on Main St., East of the 101 (1301 E Main St, SM by Home Motors) at 7:30am to carpool/caravan out Hwy 166 to Soda Lake Road and into the monument.



If you would like to do the 1.5-mile RT hike to the Painted Rock Native American pictographs, the self-guided tour requires reservations 24 hrs. in advance from Recreation.gov (\$1 reservation fee). Also, on the website they say, "You must not make, for commercial use, any digital photography, print, or video images of any pictographs or petroglyphs." I read online that the area around Painted Rock was burned but "likely" did not get into the rock formation itself. Carrizo Plains has no services available (gas, food, water, charging) and a restroom at the visitor center is supposed to be open but we cannot be sure. COME PREPARED! Bring water and lunch/snacks with you, along with t.p. 😊

Need more info? Contact Penni at penpowell2020@gmail.com

Why go? – A wildland fire creates opportunities for new life and photographs!

And Beyond...

March 1-6th Blood Moon in Death Valley Multi-Day Field Trip See the flyer in this Galleon for more info. Camp (\$) or motel (\$\$\$\$). Photograph the total lunar eclipse at 3:33am on March 3rd and maybe experience a super bloom in Death Valley.

Got an idea? Email Penni at penpowell2020@gmail.com

Where will you be on March 3rd at 3:33 am?

The blood moon is coming...



GETTY IMAGES

Let us go to Death Valley for the total lunar eclipse and possible Super Bloom!

March 1st (Sunday) drive to Stovepipe Wells – stay one night.

- Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes
- Devil's Cornfield

March 2nd – 5th (Mon-Thurs) stays 3 nights at Furnace Creek

- Harmony Borax Works
- 20 Mule team Canyon
- Zabriskie Point
- Artist's Palette
- Badwater Basin

March 5th (Thursday) drive to Lone Pine/Alabama Hills – stay one night or more.

- Mobius Arch sunrise
- The Alabama Hills

Lodging in motel or RV camping (for motel, check these motel websites or your favorite booking site)

- Stovepipe Wells: \$220+/night stovepipedeathvalley.com RV camping walk-in National Park CG
- Furnace Creek Ranch: \$350+/night with senior's discount oasisatdeathvalley.com RV camping walk-in at Sunset CG
- Lone Pine: the Dow Villa is recommended or RV campground / boondock in the Hills.

Direct your questions to Penni penpowell2020@gmail.com

USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLUB

Meetings

In February there will be a program meeting (February 4th) and the competition meeting (February 18)

Location

Our first meeting of every month will be held at Merrill Garden Retirements Center at 1350 N. Suey Road, Santa Maria. The second meeting will be via Webex.
If you want to participate, *please send an email to santamariacameraclub@gmail.com*

Membership dues

\$ 35 per person; \$ 50 Family; \$ 30 to participate in the competition meeting. All the due are per year

2025 Club officers

President: Jeanne Sparks
Vice President: Heidy Gruetzmacher
Secretary: Frank Tromp
Treasurer: Alan Upshaw

At-large Board Members

Nyla James, Harold Litwiler, Jim McKinniss, Flavio Parigi, Penni Powell, Diane Thomsen

2025 Competition Rules

Each member may submit a maximum of 3 total image submissions in any category per competition.

Categories will be:

Digital Color, Digital Monochrome

Immediate Past president

Cheryl Decker

2025 Special Subjects

March – Landscape.
June – Macro Photography.
September – Still Life

Submit your images for digital competition to:

All the digital images can only be submitted by email at this email address santamariacameraclub@gmail.com
All the digital images **MUST** be received no later than the Sunday prior to the Wednesday competition. Images not received on time will not be entered in the competition

Galleon Director

Flavio Parigi fparigi@aol.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & CLUB VOLUNTEERS

Webmaster	Greg Doudna
Digital Projectionist	Greg Doudna
Slide Projectionist	Ed E. Powel
SMCC Directory & Calendar	Rosie Brancacio
Historian	Nyla James
Judge Recruitment	Harold Litwiler
Saturday Chat	Jim McKinniss
Point Tabulator	Richard Russ & Flavio Parigi
Print Coordinators	Flavio Parigi & Jim Snodgrass
Slide Coordinator	Elaine Calvert
Image scoring	Elaine Calvert, Penni Powell
Program Recruitment	Elaine Calvert
Refreshment	Everyone
PSA Representative	Nyla Janes
Library Coordinator	Ed E Powell
Meeting room setup	Everyone
Membership recruitment	Richard Russ
Field trips	Penni Powell, Bob Mihelic, Rosie Brancacio, Bonnie Adams, Alan Upshaw, Greg Doudna
Name Tags	Nyla James

“The camera sees more than the eye so why not make use of it.”

— Edward Weston