

Dear SWMCCC Members,

Spring has brought us the renewal of life, once again gracing us with beautiful floral displays. I hope you are all able to be out photographing the beauty around us.

As summer approaches, I look forward to the Summer Weekend of Photography! There are so many classes, workshops, lectures, and programs to choose from. Don VanderMolen and his committee have worked very hard to bring us a fantastic line up. New this year is a photo contest. See the web site for the rules. Registration is in full swing, and the details are all posted on the SWMCCC Web Site. Payment can be made on the web site with Paypal, and it's easy and convenient.

Web Site! I have referred to it many times already. Jim Shearer Jr. works very hard at keeping our award winning SWMCCC Web Site current and up to date, filled with tons of information. It is easy to use too. If you have not visited the site recently, I suggest you go and check it out!

Randy Wegener and his committee have just completed the spring SWMCCC Competition including a great photo opportunity after the competition to photo the USS Silversides Submarine docked in Muskegon. There were many great entries making the judges work very hard choosing the acceptances, honors, and winners. All of the winning photos can be viewed on the SWMCCC Web Site under the competition heading.

Cari Weber, who has agreed to serve as the VP of Programs, led us on a lighthouse crawl this winter. A good time was had by all, even by the participant who ended up with a foot in the lake. New friendships were formed, and I have seen many great photos taken by those who participated. I can't wait to see what Cari has planned for us next!

Our Program List for SWMCCC clubs has been updated! If your club is looking for a program, check out what is available from our SWMCCC members. If you have a program that you are willing to give, let me know and we will add it.

With so many photo opportunities made available by our SWMCCC clubs, it makes me wonder why anyone would not want to belong to a local camera club. I am often asked, “why should I get involved in a photo club when I can go out and shoot myself?” I also hear members say they like their group just the way it is so why should we recruit new members. I didn’t have to think hard or long for an answer to those questions. Having a buddy or a buddy group is so important and helpful when trying to make advances and progress. I have learned this in many of my pursuits.

I have two workout buddies who hold me accountable to my regiment. They encourage me when I feel less than motivated, help me track my progress, and make me accountable. Today is a great example of how this works. We met at a park (they are runners and I am not!). I reluctantly agreed knowing full well they were going to make me run, so I set a few ground rules for myself before I ever left my house.

1. I am only running one mile total.
2. I am only running in quarter mile increments.
3. I am not giving into their whims and brilliant ideas.

To make a long story short, I ran a total of two miles, in half mile increments, giving into their whims and brilliant ideas. With their encouragement, cheering and even a little bit of pushing, I was able to double my goal. I learned that my body could do more than I thought it could.

Photo buddies/photo clubs will give you the same results. Teaming up with others that have the same interests and goals will give you extra opportunities.

1. Working together and shooting with others gives you more ideas on what and how to photo something. Everyone sees things differently and by working together and watching each other, it makes you see your subject in a way you might not have thought of.
2. Photographing with others keeps me from being short sighted. I went to the park to photograph a covered bridge. That is what I had set my mind to do. My photo buddies found some very pretty wild flowers that I also photographed. I do not think I would have found them as I had set out for something else. One of the buddies with me only shoots landscapes. He does not even own a macro lens. He borrowed one and was so pleased

with his results that he now owns his own lens and is out shooting some great macro photography.

3. At another photo outing with photo buddies, I was able to bring back some great photos of up close moving water. We were out photographing a waterfall. The stream at the bottom has a steep drop with large boulders. It seemed impossible to get to. On a whim and a brilliant idea we all decided to descend to the bottom. With everyone working together, helping and encouraging each other, we were able to get down and back. We got unique photographs of the falls from an angle that most others never get to.

Working with my photo buddies, I was able to get many photographs that I might not have gotten. They helped me and in return I helped them as well. We all came out with more knowledge than what we started with, and with the team work also comes friendships. What a great way to fine tune and perfect my pursuit of photography.

Go out and promote your club! Get more involved if you are not already, and attend the wonderful opportunities our clubs and SWMCCC provide for you! The friendships you will make and the improvement to your photography will be well worth your "investment."

Hope to see you all at the Summer Weekend of Photography!

Happy shooting!

Kelly Walkotten  
SWMCCC President