



## Photographing Fireworks – Brian Loflin

Summer is upon us all. It's the first season for viewing and photographing fireworks. The photography of fireworks is fun for all, even your non-photography partners. It's even easy, but there are some tips that will make the activity much more rewarding.

The first step is thoughtful planning. You should know in advance where the display will be held. As there are several in a community, you should consider the one that has the best aerial display, lasts longer, and has an adequate point of view. Consider the lay of the land and find the spot from which the pyrotechnics will be fired. Then find a position that provides an unobstructed view, preferably from higher ground. As you consider your position, you should consider the background as well and be able to avoid obstacles such as power poles, antennas, and overhead wires.

Once determined, arrive at your selected spot early- very early as others may have the same idea and you want to secure your position. Once there, be sure you can be comfortable for the duration. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and refreshments. Make a picnic out of the event. Your companions will enjoy the evening much more.

The first piece of equipment to set up is a sturdy tripod with a good variable head. Assure you are on solid ground and the leg extensions are suitable for the camera

eye level you wish. Stability is essential as some exposures may be several seconds long. Then mount your camera to the tripod. Today, DSLRs and Mirrorless versions are the best choice. Attach an electronic cable release to assure making exposures without holding the camera which can cause unwanted vibrations.



Select your lens based on the angle of view of the image you previsualize. In my opinion, a good medium zoom provides optimum flexibility in composition. If you are at a greater distance, a longer zoom may be the best selection. Consider the need to cover the foreground and a good part of the sky to cover the broadest and highest aerial bursts. Some photographers prefer vertical camera orientation, others, horizontal. This is a purely compositional decision. If you would like a wider panorama such as a cityscape, horizontal is the choice. But if you really want the bursts in greater detail, then vertical may be the best choice.



The camera exposure settings are relatively simple as the firework burst creates its own exposure time. Set your ISO to your low standard setting such as ISO 200. Don't be lured into high ISOs just because it is night and dark. White Balance of daylight is fine. Shooting in RAW format will allow color balance changes in post processing. Fireworks are very bright. An aperture of F8 or F11 is perfect for exposure and provides enough depth of field to cover the scene. The shutter speed should be set on "Bulb" or "Time" so you can start and stop the exposure at will.

Autofocus should be OFF. Having arrived early allows you to prefocus on the spot where the firing of the bursts occurs. Focus well on that spot and turn autofocus OFF.

In the daylight adjust your composition to include that firing point and the sky that you wish to cover. Only just now you are set for the show! Now wait for dark and the show to start confident that you are set up properly.

Once the show begins, plan each shot. Watch the device climb into the sky and make the first burst. If your composition is off, fix it now through small adjustments in direction and elevation.

Now for the first exposure. As the firework climbs trigger the shutter and hold it open until the burst fizzles. You can make good exposures of one burst or several in the same manner. Leave the shutter open for two or three for added variety. The rest is up to you!

My favorite setup is as follows.

Full frame DSLR

Heavy tripod and ball head.

And be there!

Electronic cable release

24-70 mm zoom lens

RAW, ISO 200

White Balance: daylight

F8

And be there!



# Heat vs. Your Cameras

-Brian Loflin

Even though this week is just the Summer Solstice, it is getting oppressively hot. Temperatures have reached the triple-digit mark in Central Texas and yesterday Austin hit an all-time record high heat index. We have all said it, “It is simply too hot to be out.”

We have all known the warnings about leaving your child or pet in an unattended car. But what about your camera gear?

Temperatures in an enclosed car can soar above 140 degrees and even parked in the shade those temps can reach 100 degrees or more. And within the locked trunk, the temperatures can be significantly higher.

Too much heat can damage your digital camera’s image sensor and other electronics. It can also degrade moving parts, including the mechanical shutter. Sudden temperature swings can also damage your camera. For example, if you take your camera outside on a cold day, the sudden temperature change can cause high thermal stress and damage the camera body and lens too.

Autofocus lenses have electronics, and too much heat can degrade those electronics, reducing the lenses’ lifespan. Heat can also melt the grease inside a lens’ focusing assembly, causing the lubricant to flow to the lens surfaces and aperture blades.

You won’t notice the heat damage immediately, but too much heat can significantly reduce your camera’s lifespan.

Different cameras can have different safe operating temperatures, and manufacturers specify them in camera manuals and online specifications. However, most cameras are safe for short periods within 32°F to 104°F.

Photographing with a camera during the extreme heat can have an adverse effect on the images as well.

Digital cameras generate heat from the system electronics. Longer photo sessions create even more heat. One of the effects of this internal heat is the creation of digital noise (like grain) in the image. Even “noise free” cameras will experience this. So, we need to keep our cameras cooler for the best experience.

Another factor creating adverse conditions is moving from air-conditioning out to a hot and humid environment. This causes condensation, not only on the outside of the camera body but inside as well. And electronics and moisture do not mix.

Suggestions to prevent adverse conditions from the heat include of course, don’t leave your camera inside your parked car, or leave the camera in direct sunlight. You can use camera shades, tents, and umbrellas to prevent direct sunlight from reaching the camera. You can take breaks to prevent the camera from overheating- when the camera gets too hot, turn it off and leave it to cool down. It is wise not to change lenses in hot outdoors- the sudden temperature swing can damage your camera’s exposed image sensor.

And lastly, padded camera cases or Pelican-type cases will offer additional protection for your camera and lenses from sudden temperature swings and excessive heat.



## **Changes to Club Evaluations**

Effective with the upcoming July 6 evaluation, there will be some visible changes made.

The objective for evaluations has always been to provide a forum for education about producing good photographic images. For a very long time the process was presented within the meetings. At one time because of a large number of images presented and the time limitations at the Rec Center, the process was moved off site. This was deemed a mistake in judgment.

Therefore, the entire process will again happen during the actual club meeting every other month.

The images will be collected via email to [bkloflin@austin.rr.com](mailto:bkloflin@austin.rr.com). They will be distributed to a panel of three or four evaluators who will review the images prior to the meeting. At the meeting the images will be projected, and comments made by the panel with additional comments and/or questions from the audience. Since this may be a bit lengthy, no other activities are planned for evaluation nights.

Additionally, the requirement for assignment images to be made within the current year is eliminated.

It is felt this change will again bring the educational value of the process back to the image maker and to club as a whole.



## **Photography Educational Resources**

**Kevin Gourley Photography**  
<https://www.kevingourley.com>

**Tim Grey**  
<http://www.timgreypphoto.com/>

**Robert Gallucci**  
<https://www.rgallucci.com/>

**Tim Shields**  
<https://timshields.com/>

**Matt Koslawski**  
<https://mattk.com/>

**Maryland Photo Alliance**  
<https://www.mdphotoalliance.org/>



A photograph is usually looked at - seldom looked into.

- Ansel Adams -

## Meeting Minutes for June 1, 2023

Brian Loflin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He introduced two visitors from the Hill Country Cameral Club. He announced that some changes were being made to our club, now in existence for 25 years, which would be discussed after the presentation. He announced that there will be no field trip this weekend to the sunflower exhibit, because of lack of interest, but he has more ideas for the future.

Steve Houston gave an informative presentation on Eclipse Photography, which included details about when and where both annular and total eclipses can be seen, and the types of equipment that will be needed to view and photograph them.

In the subsequent discussion about the future of the club, Brian said that the club was organized to be a service to photographers of all ages and experience levels. Some of the things that have been offered lately have not generated much interest, and interest in field trips has been waning. Volunteerism that the club needs to function has also been waning.

To encourage submission of photos for evaluations, he has changed the rule that previously limited photos to those taken within the last year. Now, photos in the assignment or general categories can be submitted regardless of when they were taken. Steve Houston needs help in the evaluation process. What is missing is the opportunity for input from everyone regarding the image. In the future, a panel approach will be taken with opportunities for input from all members. Volunteers were selected for the panel for the July evaluations. Barbara Hunley needs help with newsletter content. Members are encouraged to share content with her that other members would enjoy reading.

Regarding field trips, it is felt that those that can be done in one day and include group interaction and a meal might be best attended by the members and serve the clubs purposes best. He is planning a field trip to the San Antonio Zoo that will include a rental van to take us there together.

There was discussion about workshops, which are the best opportunity for retaining learning. One suggestion was a hands-on workshop regarding what's new in Photoshop. It was also suggested that information presented at meetings be subsequently sent to members so more of that information can be retained.

There was additional discussion about snacks at meetings. If we want to resume that, someone will need to volunteer to coordinate it. Cathy Roberts volunteered to bring bottled water to the next meeting, which will be a photo evaluation meeting.



### **Volunteers needed for the following categories:**

- **Newsletter editor** - Produce a monthly newsletter.
- **Programs, field trips, and workshops.** Someone to help coordinate these events.

If you feel lead to volunteer in one of these capacities, please email Barbara Hunley at [austinshtterbug@gmail.com](mailto:austinshtterbug@gmail.com)

# Assignment Categories for 2023



July 6

## ***Repeating Geometric Shapes*** –

A photographic image whose subject is, or is heavily supported by, the appearance of **repeating geometric shapes**. These shapes may be circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, etc. Computer generated geometric shapes or images are not allowed.

September 7

## ***Monochrome Image*** –

An image that is made artistically special through rendering it in **monochrome display**. The image may be made in nature or studio -in the public or private arena, and although of one color, it need not be in Black & White.

November 2

## ***Action Shots of People*** –

An image of one or more people in action. The image may or may not demonstrate motion blur. May be color or monochrome.

January 4, 2024

## ***Image enhanced by significant Post-Processing\**** –

The image must be based on an actual photograph which has been artistically altered through the use of computer post-processing. These methods may include HDR, Compositing, Sky replacement, Color replacement, Photo-stitching, Photo-stacking, and innumerable other methods. Original and final Processed photos should be submitted for review and discussion of techniques. May be color or monochrome.

When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs.  
When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.

- Ansel Adams -

## **NEXT MEETING DATE!**

Thursday, July 6, 2023

**7:00pm**

Northwest Recreation Center

2913 Northland Dr, Austin, TX 78757

*Visitors welcome!*

*We are on Facebook!*



# Austin Shutterbug Club Activities

**NOTE:** Monthly meetings are held at Austin's Northwest Recreation Center, 2913 Northland Dr., Austin, TX 78757. (NWRC)

## JULY

Meeting: Thursday, July 6, 2023

Evaluation: **"Repeating Geometric Shapes"**

Workshop: Photographing the Solar Eclipse-Saturday, July 8, 8:00 AM, NWRC outside parking lot.

## AUGUST

Meeting: Thursday, August 3, 2023

Program: **Hard vs. Soft Light and Why it Matters**

Workshop: **Post Processing with New Photoshop Tools**-Saturday, August 12, 10:00 AM-2:00PM, North Village Branch Library, 2505 Steck Ave.

## SEPTEMBER

Meeting: Thursday, September 7, 2023

Evaluation: **"Monochrome Image"**

Workshop: **Camera Basics and Post-Processing Basics**- Saturday, September 16, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM, Yarbrough Branch Library, 2200 Hancock Dr.

## OCTOBER

Meeting: Thursday, October 5, 2023,

Program: TBD

Workshop: **Bring your Grandkids for "Family Photos Workshop"** Saturday, October 7, 9:00AM- 12:00 PM, Northwest District Park, 7000 Ardath St.

## NOVEMBER

Meeting: Thursday, November 2, 2023,

Evaluation: **"Action Shots of People"**

Special Presentation: Eclipse Photos from Members.

## DECEMBER

Meeting: Thursday, December 7, 2023,

Holiday Dinner Party TBD

