

Focal Points

Sierra Club Camera Committee Newsletter January, 2016



Death Valley Trip Report

Death Valley Days with Michael Gordon

Trip Report 12/2/2016 to 12/6/2016 by John Nilsson

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I attended the SCCC Meeting held at the G2 Gallery last November 11 and was impressed by the Gallery display and presentation given by Michael Gordon of Michael E. Gordon Photography. His work reminds me of Gaylen Rowell's in many ways. I had been contemplating my first trip to Death Valley. Following the meeting I cornered Michael for a few questions and found he was planning a workshop in Death Valley the first week in December. I signed up with him and convinced Basil, a photographer friend from Denver to accompany us.

The day before we were to meet in Stovepipe Wells I rented an SUV in downtown LA and picked up Basil at the Burbank Airport. The late afternoon drive up US 14 was uneventful but loonngg. (Why does it take 4 hours to get anywhere in Southern California?) with stops along the way to shoot interesting stuff. By 5:00 it was pitch dark. The road to Trona, our intermediate goal, goes through a lot of NOWHERE. As the headlights bored a tunnel through the gloom we became less and less certain about our route. Not a sign or another car had been seen for hours. Then, out of the gloom came a glow of civilization as Trona pulled into view at least confirming that we hadn't made some kind of eminently fatal wrong turn somewhere back around Colorado City. By the way, Colorado City was the last time we saw a GPS signal during the balance of the trip. Be sure to take a good, old-fashioned map along in the glove compartment when you go!

After another 1.5 hours of very dark highway, Stovepipe Wells appeared in the distance. The balance of the evening was spent getting ensconced into our somewhat meager lodging at the Stovepipe Inn Lodge and devouring a huge and surprisingly delicious pork chop diner at the only restaurant in town.



Day One - Great intentions of rising at 5:00 AM to take in the sunrise at Mesquite Dunes (only a mile from Stovepipe Wells) turned into 6:30. The weather was clear and cold and we enjoyed trudging around on the dunes even though sunrise had long since past. At 12:00 there was a meeting of seminar attendees in the meeting room at the Lodge where we met the participants and our leader Michael Gordon for a great 2 hour educational presentation on camera settings and general technique for capturing landscapes. We then formed up into car pool groups for the 1/2 hour drive to Aguerberry Point not far from the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. The point was cold and windy but really



inspiring and offered some tremendous vistas of the entire Park. Diner in the Stovepipe Wells restaurant nicely capped the evening.

Day Two - 5:15 AM. Taskmaster Gordon loaded up the cars for another quick trip to Mesquite Dunes - this time in time for the sunrise. Suffice it to say that timing is everything in landscape photography and we all got some memorable photographs. Then it was immediately off to The Racetrack (one of my all time bucket list destinations). Initial concerns about the condition of the road to the Racetrack due to the torrential rainstorm that hit the Park the month before proved unfounded as my rented

Day Three - 5:15 AM (again) we were off to Zabruski Point/Golden Canyon, one of the most photographed locations in the lower 48. As we set up and the sun started to rise, it could easily be seen why. This is one of the most startling and dramatic landscapes I have ever witnessed. The colors in the tortured topography were truly fantastic. A leisurely hike into Golden Canyon was quite rewarding - much like a walk on the Moon with atmosphere. Breakfast at Furnace Creek was followed closely by a trek to Marble Canyon at the northern end of the park. This trip presented some interesting four wheeling opportunities up dry washes that recently hosted the results of 3 inches of rain per hour the month previous. Both the trip up and back were covered with choking dust and interestingly contoured semi-roads (what roads?) that had me worrying about what my story was going to be when I turned my rental car back in. Fortunately we made it through unscathed with the leadership of Wagon Master Gordon. The Canyon was a memorable hike seen by few visitors to the Park and offered many photo opportunities. During the late afternoon our group became widely disbursed through miles of canyon. My solitary walk back down through the canyon in the pitch darkness will remain forever a fond memory.



Explorer handled the 23 miles without incident. After a brief stop at Teakettle Junction we arrived at The Racetrack at exactly the right time just as the sun was nearing the mountain tops to the west of this surreal landscape. We shot until it was almost too dark to see the way back to the cars. It was fascinating to witness the rock covered hillside that calves the mysterious moving rocks onto the valley floor. Evidently the phenomena is a result of wind exposure at the bottom of the hillside that picks up the rocks and moves them out onto the ancient lake bed when the moisture content of the mud is just right. Distances in the Park are really deceiving. It seemed to me that we walked miles across the lake bed to get back to the cars. This was a truly unforgettable experience.





Day Four - 5:15 AM (again, again) We seem to have developed a pattern here! Sleep is not important on this trip. Another drive through the burgeoning dawn is again in order. This time Bad Water. We were in hopes that the wet November had provided a hint of the intermittent lake that sometimes acts as a relecting pond on the Bad Water Salt Flats. No luck this year. Still, the awe inspiring distances were startling out on the flats and the raw beauty of the sunrise was a terrific end to a great photo trip.

And a great one it was indeed! I guessed that we had walked over 30 miles through Death Valley and driven over 200 inside the Park. If you ever get a chance to go on one of Michael's trips - just do it. He gives tremendous value and is a really good guy. His specialty is Death Valley and I doubt few know the Park better.

Check him out at www.michael-gordon.com.

John Nilsson





Late Afternoon at the Racetrack

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Marble Canyon at dusk



Basil at the Dunes

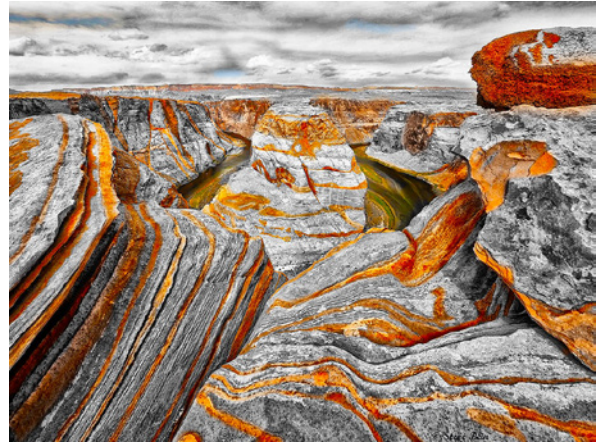
Early Morning at Bad Water Flats



The Digital Artistry of Steve Bein

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Horseshoe Bend is a famous circular bend in the Colorado River south of Lake Powell. It is famous and now, very popular. Most of the visitors go to the center of the bend, serious photographers tend to put their tripod feed at the edge or even partly in space to get a down look at the river thousands of feet below. Since I always try to find a great foreground to match the rest of the image, I just had to look down to see the amazing rock formations at the edge of the cliff and the foreground just adds to the uniqueness of the image and the location.

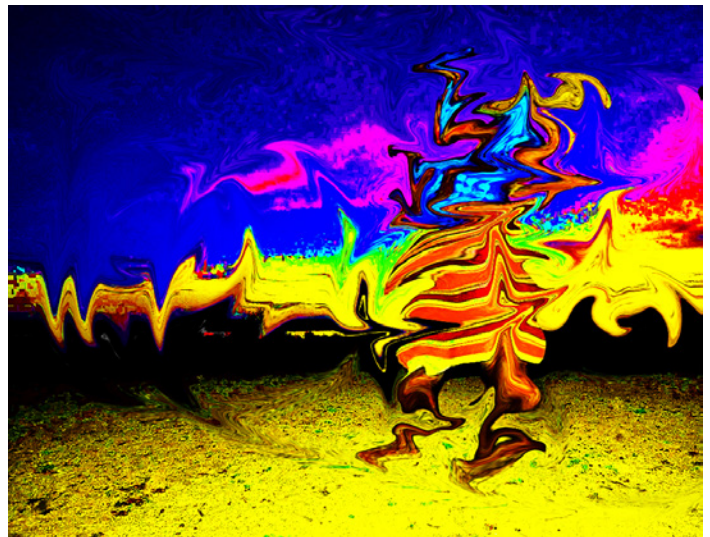


House on Fire, Anasazi ruin, is a beautiful location. It too had great potential when I started with combining B&W and color. While I had seen many note cards, with a color subject on a B&W background, I had not seen the technique of combining the whole image in both before. I do not claim to be the only one doing this, but I have not seen others.



There is a genius macro and creative photographer in New Zealand. He introduced me to the box concept. I have not reached his mastery of Photoshop creations, but I have had a ball with making a box formation with an open lid and I added in the bear looking out.





As photographers, we create images, we sculpt them with light, shadows, polarizers and so on. We can saturate, desaturate, and modify in many ways.

Here are some submissions of my personal creativity inspired to the creativity of others as well as myself.

Many started as birds, some landscapes, and others from treatments others have used. With some, I have forgotten how I did the effects, and others I can duplicate .

Starting with Horseshoe Bend of the Colorado River and the Left Mitten at Monument Valley.

Shane Berry Inspired me to visit the Anasazi Ruin called House on Fire, and I was there and revisited it with some modifications.

Years ago, I went to Antelope Valley, I title that creative result, "Antelope swallows Photographer"

I have also done some box creations using my photo and sometimes adding extras from other of my photos.

Here is a bear in a box which is covered with a brown bear and her cub in Alaska.

And some bird photos. Two eagles, and I added noted bird photographer, Artie Morris' head on another one between the mirror images of a banking eagle.

Best,
Steve Bein
310-838-2346



2016 SCCC OUTINGS/EVENTS



Surf, Seaside Painted Cups, Seaside Daisies, Point Lobos SNR, CA
©Judith Molle

*** ADVANCE NOTICE ***

BIG SUR to POINT LOBOS PHOTOGRAPHY Coastline + Tide Pools + Wildflowers

MAY 11-13 2016 WEDNESDAY - FRIDAY

Observe + photograph rugged Carmel locations with easy-moderate hikes along established coastal trails. Visit scenic Point Lobos State Natural Reserve + Garrapata Beach.

Camp in the redwoods or motel on own. Trip fee (\$60) includes 3 nights camping in Big Sur - tent only/NO RVs (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday).

Our group size will be limited!

Questions? Please contact Leader, Judy Molle or Co-Leader, Stephen Beck.

Front Page Photo Credit:

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If you would like to send in a front page photograph for consideration, please send photo IN PORTRAIT CONFIGURATION. Size 11.5" on long side by 9" on short side. Minimum density of 10 mp and Resolution of 300dpi.

Please Send to:

dtlanow@gmail.com

New photographers are selected as often as possible. Questions on how to size your cover photo submission to fit are welcome.

Sierra Club Camera Committee January Meeting

When: Monday, January 11, 7:30 PM

Where: Felicia Mahood Center
11338 Santa Monica Blvd., West LA

What: Linnea Bullion is an editorial, travel, and lifestyle photographer based in Los Angeles. During the summer of 2014, she drove 20,000 miles around the United States and self-published a photo book documenting the journey. She'll be speaking about lonely roads, small-town strangers, and how remarkable it is to unwittingly find yourself in the middle of the woods surrounded by Bigfoot researchers.

Her web site is at: <http://www.linneabullion.com>



Please note:

Please join us to Meet and Greet this month's speaker, Linnea Bullion, before the Monday night meeting at 6:00 sharp, Monday, January 11, at Jin Jiang Restaurant, 11057 Santa Monica Blvd. (Just down the street from our meeting room.)

Everyone is Welcome. Reservations are not necessary. See you there!

Member Announcements

John Nilsson, Editor, writes:

Your contributions to the newsletter - both written and pictorial - are important!

I view the Focal Points as by and for the membership of the Sierra Club Camera Committee and I can only continue to provide a fresh and interesting newsletter if I receive lots of new content each month.

I'm sure you are all out there shooting!

I look forward to your contributions and remind you of one overriding concept: This is your publication - anything you present to me that is appropriate to the Sierra Club Camera Committee will be published in Focal Points. Keep 'em coming! Thanks!

Peter Vanderhoof writes:

I am having an adventure.....in Mexico
Anyway, I was not able to make the Member's Meeting and wanted to share the Time Lapse. It's made of several different night shoots, including a couple of the Camera Committee Meeting outings.

The Time Lapse is on my zenfolio site and unlocked to download.

SCCC LIGHT PAINTING TIMELAPSE 2015

Please copy and paste the below link into your browser to view the Timelapse

<http://vanderhoofphotography.zenfolio.com/p114307647/h691C9812#h691c9812>

CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. To read the liability waiver before you participate on an outing, go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms>

Member Announcements continued

Rusty Nelson Writes:

Please join me and other photographers on Saturday, January 16th at the G2 Gallery.

The G2 Gallery on Abbot Kenny in Venice, CA will be celebrating the 100-Year Anniversary of the National Park Service with the first of four special exhibits throughout 2016. Along with local and current photographers, on display will be Ansel Adams Portfolio II: The National Parks and Monuments. The first exhibit celebrates our National Parks of The North East and will have the artists reception on the 16th of January (Saturday). This is always a fun well attended event and I would like to encourage folks to come out and support not only the photographers but our local photography gallery. I'm truly excited to have a few of my images selected for display during this first exhibit.

About Portfolio II: The National Parks and Monuments

Released by Ansel Adams in 1950, Portfolio II: The National Parks and Monuments contains many of Adams's most iconic images. Portfolio II was issued just two years after Adams's first portfolio dedicated to the memory of Alfred Stieglitz. From California and Alaska to Tennessee and Maine, Portfolio II contains photographs from national parks all over the country, reflecting Ansel's passion for maintaining those areas as protected land for generations to come. Such famous images as Zabriskie Point, Death Valley National Monument California and Moth and Stump, Interglacial Forest, Glacier Bay National Park helped to spur on the conservation movement in the United States

Enjoy hors-d'oeuvres, wine, complimentary valet, and a raffle ticket. You will need to RSVP at RSVP@TheG2Gallery.com

Hope to see you there,

Rusty Nelson

www.facebook.com/RustyNelsonPhotography



100 Years of National Parks: The North East

Featuring: Timothy S. Allen, Peter Baumgartner, Michael Darough,
Kevin Ebi, Rich Greene, Rick Kattelman, Vidya Narasimhan,
Rusty Nelson & Scott Tansey

EXHIBIT:

Start: January 12th, 2016

Finish: April 3rd, 2016

RECEPTION:

Date: Saturday, January 16, 2016

Time: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Please RSVP to:

rsvp@theg2gallery.com

ADMISSION:

\$10 at door benefits

National Parks Conservation Association

Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, wine, complimentary valet, and a raffle ticket.

1503 Abbot Kinney Blvd.
Venice, CA 90291
(310) 452 2842
www.theG2gallery.com

Supporting Art and the Environment

Monday-Saturday 10-7*
Sunday 10-6
info@theg2gallery.com

Please note: The G2 Gallery and/or gift shop periodically close for private events and holidays.
For updated listings of events and closures, please visit <http://www.calendar.theg2gallery.com/>.



Rusty Nelson

Joan Schipper - Milky Way



© Joan Schipper

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For Sale By Members

- Nikon 50mm Lens -** Nikon AF Nikkor, 50mm 1:1.8 D Lense. Quick focus, very sharp and extremely compact and light.....\$75.00
- ioShutter for Canon -** Use your iPhone as a remote shutter controller! This is a really slick little item that you'll wonder how you ever did without! Contact me and I'll go over details or see at www.ioShutter.com.....\$25.00
- Manfrotto Digital Director -** PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS: Real-Time Live View Monitoring on your iPad Air
Controls Camera Functions from iPad
Interactive Focus and Digital Zoom
Remote Shooting Control
- Brand New**, never used. Sells new for \$500.00.....\$350.00

Contact: John Nilsson, 970-390-7600 for all above

If you have an idea for a trip that the Camera Committee might like to plan for, tell a leader. They are always open to ideas of new places to go, new places to shoot. See the end of the newsletter for a list of contact information for the leaders.

Causes

Each month I'd like to feature a group or organization that is working to protect or enhance our environment and lifestyle. We are about Photography but we are also all about the promoting of the ideals and goals of the Sierra Club. Please feel free to contact me with information or links to endeavors that warrant our attention
- Editor

southwestern utah wilderness alliance



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From Representative Rob Bishop's Public Lands Initiative to the Native American-led effort to protect the Bears Ears, there's no question that 2016 is set to be a pivotal year for Utah's wilderness

To be ready to seize the opportunities of the new year (and to fight off some big threats), we've set an ambitious year-end goal of raising \$150,000.

With just three days left, we've already raised \$83,422.

Can you join thousands of other people who've supported redrock wilderness in 2016 by making a contribution today?

The support of people like you has made a tremendous difference in the past.

By the time SUWA was founded 30 years ago, more than half of the 23 million acres of desert wilderness was already gone. Since then, with the support of people like you, we've successfully protected 99% of Utah's remaining redrock wilderness.

Let's keep that winning record going and reach our year-end goal. Please, make a contribution to protect wilderness today.

Thank you for taking action.

Scott Groene
Southwestern Utah Wilderness Alliance

This Month's Member Photos

I've attached 4 photographs from our ongoing trip through the Southwest. Below are the captions for each filename. The images below may be in a different order, so go by the filename.

Joe_Doherty-1: Winter Solstice Sunrise in Valley of Fire State Park. This is a great place to begin a long trip, as it's nearly impossible to leave your camera in the bag. Our first stop was sunrise at Balance Rock, which is a short walk from the visitor center. We had the place to ourselves.

Joe_Doherty-2: Celebrating Christmas in Bryce Canyon. Velda and I took a short hike along Mossy Cave Creek to this frozen waterfall. The temperature was around 0 degrees in the shade, and several inches of fresh snow had fallen that morning, making this a very special place to spend the holiday.

Joe_Doherty-3: Mossy Cave Castle, Bryce Canyon National Park. Christmas in Bryce began with sub-freezing temperatures and snowdrifts. When the sky cleared we headed for Mossy Cave Trail and found this wonderful spot below the first bridge, about 200 yards from the car.

Joe_Doherty-4: Ice and Reflection in Pine Creek, Zion National Park. Christmas weekend brought dramatic drops in temperature to Southern Utah, with great sheets of ice covering sections of Pine Creek. In the late afternoon the red walls of Zion are illuminated by the setting Sun, creating spectacular opportunities for abstracts like this one.

Happy New Year,
Joe Doherty



(C) Joe Doherty



(C) Joe Doherty



(C) Joe Doherty



(C) Joe Doherty

This Month's Member Photos continued



The Happy Monk
 "A Cambodian monk is reflected in the still water at the edge of the bay in Kep. He was very happy to pose for this photo!"

I just came back from Australia & Cambodia last month and thought I'd share a few photos -
 Beverly Houwing



Pelican Feeding Frenzy - this was a National Geographic Daily Dozen on December 4th.

"In the afternoon the wild pelicans on Kangaroo Island off the coast of Southern Australia can depend on an extra meal from a local man who has set up a daily feeding. Dozens of these huge birds crowd the dock in eager anticipation. When the squid and chunks of fish come out, the frenzy begins!"



Sunset at Kep Harbor
 "At sunset the fishing boats dock in the harbor at Kep, Cambodia. The setting sun silhouettes the boats and the men working on them."



Bamboo Train

"The Bamboo Train was originally built by French colonial settlers and has been largely abandoned since the days of the Khmer Rouge. Reaching speeds of up to about 30 mph, these lightweight vehicles run along a single track that requires, by etiquette, that the one with the least amount of passengers and/or cargo be disassembled by the two drivers allowing the more loaded train to pass, then the other one is reassembled and each continues on its way. This photo shows our driver taking us down the track at a good speed."

All Photos this Page:

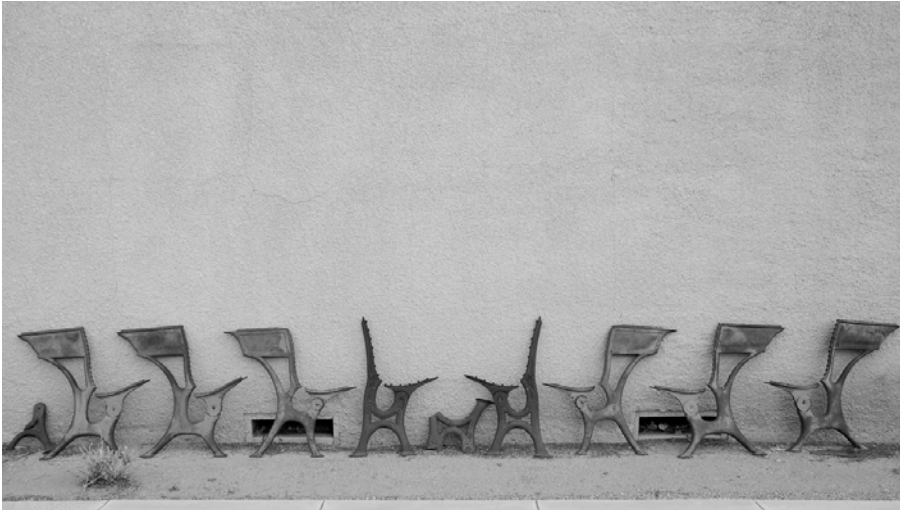
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This Month's Member Photos *continued*

Your call for submissions was good timing. I was sitting at my computer working on photos.

I visited the Mojave National Preserve in December for the Geminid Meteor Shower. The goal of the outing was to capture meteors, but we did some additional exploration and captured some interesting day-time photos, too. -

Joan Schipper



Goff's School was found on the grounds of the Goff's School Museum.



Desert Ribbons was captured in the wonderful winter light on Kelso Dunes.

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Hole-in-the-Wall shows Orion at the top of the frame and a meteor beyond the tree at the bottom. This is one frame from a night sky time-lapse available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu3lRim4Bs4.

© Joan Schipper

This Month's Member Photos continued

Two new images from my Santa Monica at Night Series - Steve Cohen

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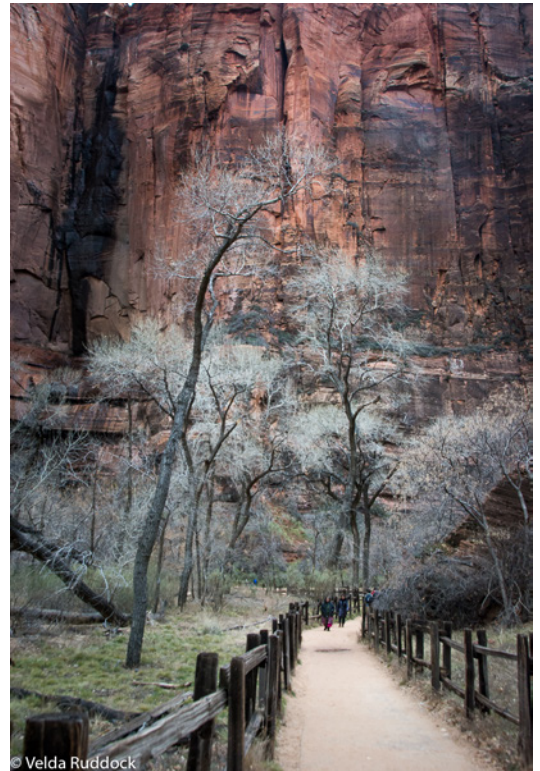
Joe and I are on a two week photo safari of the Southwest. These are my top photos so far:

Velda Ruddock



© Velda Ruddock

Valley of Fire after the rains. Turning around and, "Oh, Wow!"



© Velda Ruddock

Path to the Temple of Sinawava in Zion National Park. Surrounded by massive canyon walls, it did feel like a sacred place. And then it hailed.



© Velda Ruddock

Bryce Canyon National Park. Beyond the stellar natural beauty my imagination made this an ancient fortress in the snow.



© Velda Ruddock

The Watchman in Zion National Park: Shot from the bridge, at sunset, this is a valentine.

All photos this page ©2015 Velda Ruddock, all rights reserved



Velda Ruddock - Shutterbug Magazine is using my photo, "Aspens in Snow" for their full-page "Final Shot" feature in the February issue. What a confidence builder!.

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