

# FOOTHILLS PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

*Monthly Newsletter*



*Cover photo: Amelia Chatham*



*Beautiful photos: Amelia Chatham*

## *From our President.....*

Fellow Club Members,



Another year has come and gone. It has been a year filled with trials and fears with changes in lifestyles for all of us. Finding a balance between what's normal and what's safe has not been easy. I feel that as a group we have been very fortunate to continue to meet and share our thoughts and ideas as well as our images. Though we have missed the face to face social exchange that is so much a part of our meetings. The information we get from our speakers has remained at a high level. I feel that our meetings have provided a sense of normalcy in a very non-normal world. For those of you who have been able to continue to meet and participate I am indeed thankful.

The theme for our December Meeting Critique is “Pets”! Get out and take some wonderful images of those wonderful pets. After our speaker we will review the images and discuss

them. Unless you want to claim the image, all critiques are anonymous. Step out of your comfort zone send in your images. Images should be emailed to me at [dshort@hemc.net](mailto:dshort@hemc.net) by 12:00 noon December 14, 2020.

Our next meeting is December 15<sup>th</sup> on Zoom. Our speaker will be Tom Wilson. He will present a program on “Storytelling”. I know that for me this is always a difficult thing to accomplish. The meeting details and invite will be in the announcement section of this Newsletter. I look forward to seeing each of you there.

I would like to urge paid members, especially to attend these meetings on Zoom. They count toward the drawing for our Cades Cove Prize. Board members are not eligible for this drawing. Viewing the meeting on Facebook does not count, you must log in on Zoom. The winner will get a \$300 gift certificate for a trip to Cades Cove. The more meetings you attend the better your chances. Drawing will be held during the March meeting. I also will be announcing a really exciting change for the coming year at this meeting. Just think you could be the Foothills Photography Group - Photographer of the Year for 2021! See you at the meeting.

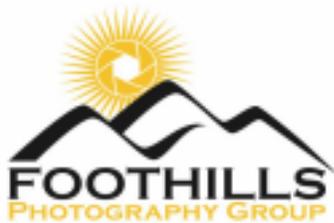
Don't forget, *CSSI!!!!* Click that Shutter and Share your Images.

Oh yea, Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!!!

Daniel W. Short

President, Foothills Photography Group

## **Foothills Photography Group News:**



December meeting will be on Zoom. All paid members will be sent an invitation to view the meeting. You will be able to view from your phone, tablet or computer.

Next Meeting: December 15, 2020

Foothills photography group is a club made up of people of all ages and backgrounds. Our aim is the enjoyment, mastery, and furtherance of photography through cooperation and good fellowship.

**Due to the current Pandemic we are currently meeting on Zoom. Join us at our next Meeting.**

Time: Dec 15, 2020 Social Time, 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada),

Meeting Starts at 07:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89626363209?pwd=ZkgyK2NUOVNTa08zSGIvSUc2ZkpLQT09>  
Meeting ID: 896 2636 3209

**Passcode: Foothills**

**This meeting is open to the public, as are all others .**



**December Program Features:** Tom Wilson “*Story Telling*”. Story telling is a very important skill. Tom Wilson has developed an introductory level presentation on creating a picture story that he will be sharing with the chapter on December 15th. Using many examples and sharing resources for additional learning in this area, Tom will offer a basic introduction to this skill and hopefully give you a tool or two to help you as you create your own photo stories.

Tom has provided images to illustrate the Chattahoochee River and surrounding area, particularly the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. His photography is used by non-profit conservation organizations. Tom believes that nature photographers should be nature advocates and use their cameras to protect and preserve our vanishing natural world.

Feel free to INVITE a friend to our online meeting!

(Meetings are usually at North Georgia Technical College (NGTC) in the Visual Tech Building, Clarkesville Campus. Social Time begins at 6:30 PM and meeting at 7:00 PM.)

**Thank you to Chuch Lotts for sharing this:  
(leaving this in again for the month just to inspire you!!!)**

It could be you... \$450,000 to be won in world's richest photographic awards  
By Chris George <<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/uk/author/chris-george>>

HIPA 2021 photo contest opens for entries and is looking for images on the theme of Humanity

With a staggering \$450,000 prize fund, the Hamdan International Photography Awards are open for entries. Celebrating its tenth anniversary, the theme for this year's HIPA contest is Humanity - with the Grand Prize winner receiving a cash award of \$120,000 for the best overall picture on the subject.

Founded in 2011 under the patronage of crown prince of Dubai Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid bin Mohammed al Maktoum, the HIPA awards are not only open to any

photographer, professional or amateur, they are also completely free to enter.

Alongside the Humanity theme, there will also be a special category for architectural images. And as usual, there will be portfolio, color, and black-and-white awards to be won too.

Entries to the competition must be submitted before 31 January 2021. To see the full details and to enter the competition, see the HIPA 2021 website <<http://www.hipa.ae/en/humanity-2020-2021/introduction>> .

**Found a good article on 42 West that might be helpful with your Christmas photos:**

## **10 Tips for Photographing Your Holiday Tree**

**[HOW TOPHOTO](#)**

*December 18, 2017*



Decorating trees during the holiday season is said to be a practice that first began in Germany in the 16th century. Hundreds of years later, this time-honored tradition is still being upheld in homes all over the world. Many families invest a lot of time and effort on their holiday tree. Most will buy a fresh new tree each year and create their own personalized tree ornaments, which usually means that each year brings a different tree that is usually unique in some way. And since it's often the focal point of your home decorations during the season,

it's no surprise that your family's tree serves as a reminder of those precious holiday memories of making tree ornaments, decorating the house as a family, opening presents while sitting around the tree, and more.

### **Holiday Tree Photography Tips:**

If you're looking to immortalize your yearly tree for your photo album, here are some holiday tree photography tips to help you out.

#### **1. Shoot in a Dim or Dark Setting**



Image via Shutterstock

Photographing your tree at [different times of the day](#) will produce different outcomes. There are no hard and fast rules here, but if you're looking to feature a particular element of the tree, then lighting and time of day will definitely play a factor.

If you want to capture your holiday tree in all its twinkling glory, it's best to take photos at night. Make sure that the room is dimly lit, preferably with only the string lights to serve as your primary light source. This enhances the appearance of the lights in your tree, allowing you to make them the primary focus.

Since you won't have a lot of ambient lighting to work with, you need to tweak your camera settings to ensure that your tree is properly exposed. Make sure to use your maximum aperture, set your ISO to its highest setting (but watch out for noise), and use a shutter speed of around 1/30 to 1/60. The settings that will work for you will depend entirely on your unique photographic circumstances, so take multiple photos and tweak your exposure settings as you go to find the right combination that works for you.

## 2. Avoid Using Flash



Image via Shutterstock

Do not use your on-camera flash—ever. In situations where the scene is simply too dark and you have no other choice, then use [an external flash](#). This is usually the case when including people in the photo, as the lights from the tree (and the little ambient lighting you do get from other light sources in the room) won't be able to light their faces properly. In this case, you will almost definitely need to use the (external) flash.

One way to check whether you need your flash or not is to [use a light meter](#) to measure the light on your subjects' faces. If the exposure is too dark, then go ahead and use your flash.

Or, you can simply use your camera's built-in light meter by adjusting your settings, taking a test shot, and checking the Exposure Level Indicator to see where you're at. Ideally, you need to be around zero, which is at the middle of the scale. However, keep in mind that this will give you an exposure reading of the entire scene, and not just your subjects' faces.

When shooting with flash, make sure to position your subject/s away from the tree, ideally at least 5 to 6 feet away. The light from your flash can wash out the string lights in your tree, making the latter look "flat" in pictures.

### 3. Use a Tripod



Image via Shutterstock

Slower shutter speeds are usually recommended when photographing holiday trees—particularly if you want to showcase the beautiful string lights, which typically demand a darker setting to allow the lights to shine. Since shooting handheld will most likely yield blurry photos, you'll need to use a [sturdy tripod](#) or monopod to keep your camera perfectly stabilized.

In the event that you don't have access to a tripod, you can prop your camera on a chair, countertop, table, or any steady surface, then set your camera's timer or use [a remote shutter release](#).

#### 4. Keep Your ISO Low



Image via Shutterstock

Using a tripod allows you to bring your ISO down to as low as you can, while using a slower shutter speed to ensure ample light.

Camera sensors will generally produce the cleanest results when you shoot with the base or native ISO setting of the camera. Since the base ISO allows your sensor to get the best signal-to-noise ratio and achieve its full dynamic range, using a lower ISO will usually give you high-quality images with the most true-to-life tonal reproduction, while allowing you to reduce or eliminate digital noise (which is an inevitable problem when shooting at high ISO settings) and achieve truly sharp photos.

## 5. Shoot in HDR



Image via Shutterstock

When the scene you are shooting exceeds your sensor's dynamic range, the highlights (the lightest parts of the image) tend to look washed out, while the shadows (the darkest parts of the image) will usually appear flat and indiscernible. HDR or high dynamic range photography is a good solution for this dilemma as it allows you to create a well-exposed image that offers greater detail in the lightest and darkest parts. It is done through auto-exposure bracketing, which is the process of taking photos of the same scene at different exposure levels and combining the best parts of them into one photo.

Holiday scenes are generally notorious for being difficult to capture due to their wide range of shadows and highlights, so if you have a camera, a tripod, and any software (such as Adobe Photoshop or Photomatix) that can help you combine the resulting images, then you should definitely give HDR a try.

Here's a tutorial on creating realistic, natural-looking HDR images by Gavin Hoey for AdoramaTV:

## 6. Zoom In on the Details



Image via Shutterstock

Focusing on the tree decorations offers a fresh perspective to the typical holiday tree photo, which is normally captured as a whole. Small details are just as important as the entire thing, and if the tree has details—such as the ornaments or the tree topper—that that are particularly beautiful or have significant meaning for you and your family, then you might want to capture those as well.

Feel free to take the photo from different vantage points and angles, and be as creative as you can in showcasing these small details.

## 7. Get Creative with Bokeh



Image via Shutterstock

Bokeh is a photography term that is used to describe the out-of-focus areas in your image. It is achieved by shooting with the widest aperture your lens will allow and using a shallow depth of field while focusing on a particular subject or area in your photo. Lenses with an aperture of  $f/2$  or wider helps you achieve a very shallow depth of field, which blurs out the rest of the scene that is not in the plane of focus.

Since your tree is likely covered in string lights, [one way to create beautiful bokeh](#) is to get close and focus on an ornament or some other detail on your tree while keeping the surrounding lights out of focus.

Another way is to play around with front bokeh, which can be achieved by holding up the string lights in front of your lens to create those fuzzy, glowing orbs all around the image.

## 8. Play with a Variety of Effects



Image via Shutterstock

There are a variety of effects you can try to creatively shoot your holiday tree. For example, if you have a rotating stand (or if you can fashion any DIY rotating device) for your tree, then you can create a sort of spinning or light painting effect by turning off the lights, setting your camera on a tripod, and [shooting a long exposure](#) of your tree as it spins in the dark.

You can also make it appear as if the lights in your tree are “twinkling” by using a special starburst filter (also known as [a cross screen filter](#)) on your lens to create four, six, or eight-pointed flares to any light sources within your photo.

## 9. Include Other Elements



Image via Shutterstock

Don't just take a photo of your tree. Incorporate other elements into your image to create a stronger and [more balanced composition](#). It can be anything that complements or contrasts with your tree, as long as it adds interest to the photo without distracting from the main subject—which is of course the tree itself.

You may also want to try [other composition techniques](#) to further enhance your image.

## 10. Make Room for People



Image via Shutterstock

Adding the human element to your photos is a great way to create a stronger connection between the viewer and the story within. And besides, what better way to immortalize your holiday tree than by including your loved ones in the shots?

If you plan to include people in your photos, keep in mind that you will have to employ some creative lighting (it would also be a good idea to learn more about [portrait lighting techniques and styles](#)) to ensure that you're able to capture their faces properly.

“How many photographers does it take to change a light bulb? 50. One to change the bulb, and forty-nine to say, ‘I could have done that!’”

– Unknown



© fCanet 2013



# Foothills Photography Group Membership Application



NAME/s \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

*Please print clearly. (The email address is for your newsletters and all group notifications)*

Are you interested in becoming an activities leader or other supporting roles? Yes  No

Referred to join Foothills Photography Group by \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues: \$40 (Adult) \$50 Family\* \$10 (Student/Youth - minimum age thirteen (13) years old)

\* All Family members MUST be in the same household.

Adult  Family  Student/Youth  Amount Paid: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check  Cash

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: **Foothills Photography Group**

Address: Foothills Photography Group For more information: John Martin  
 P.O. Box 1872 706-499-0956  
 Clarkesville, GA 30523 jmartin@hemc.net

I, \_\_\_\_\_, intending to be a legally bound member of the Foothills Photography Group (FPG); do hereby, for myself and my heirs, release all rights and claims for personal injuries or damages I incur while participating in FPG sponsored activities. I agree with these terms.

Signature/s of Parent/s or Legal Guardian/s, (if applicable) are legally bound to this agreement:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Photographic Interests

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural         | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Photography   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stock Photography      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astro/Low-Light/Night | <input type="checkbox"/> Macro/Micro Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Street Photography     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby Portraits        | <input type="checkbox"/> Model Photography       | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Photography     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event Photography     | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Photography         | <input type="checkbox"/> Underwater Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Portraits      | <input type="checkbox"/> Photojournalism         | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Exploration      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fashion Photography   | <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait Photography    | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding Photography    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Art Photography  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Photography      | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Photography   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Photography      | <input type="checkbox"/> Still Life Photography  | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                  |

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