

inFocus

Newsletter of the Westchester Photographic Society

February 2024



INSIDE:
Coming Up
Mouse Tips 2
Competition Corner
Competition 3B



Participation

We recently had a photo sharing session on Zoom where members were asked to select up to five photographs from a collection of “stock” photos submitted by some of our members (Serge Migdal, Dennis Thornton, Arnold Breisblatt, and Barbara Pollack) and to edit them in any way they wanted, the more creative the better. The idea was to see how different people can work on the same starting image and come up with different results. Sadly, turnout was very low. Only four of us chose to send in edits, and about 20-25 people attended the meeting to mostly passively watch us discuss what we did.

We, the WPS board, have been trying to find ways to increase member participation and interaction, to come up with programs that would be of interest to the membership, beyond the wonderful array of guest speakers that come to present at our meetings. We believe you've joined WPS, a “photographic society” (or perhaps more plainly a “camera club”) because you want to engage with your fellow photo enthusiasts in a common interest, not just sit behind your computer to passively watch someone else talk—you can get that on YouTube!

To that end, we organize competitions, showcases, exhibitions, editing challenges, field trips, etc. We hope there's something for everyone here. If you like competing with your fellow photographers and hearing a judge's opinion there are competitions; if you want opinions in a non-competitive setting, we have member critique nights; if you just want to try your hand at creative edits, we have the stock photo program. If you want others to see your photos on the wall and perhaps even sell them, we have exhibitions. If you'd like to show us a body of work, such as a slideshow of a trip or some other project or teach us something, we have showcases. If you want to get outside and enjoy a day photographing with your fellow WPS members, see how others take pictures, and share the photos, we have field trips. We also offer mentoring (even one-on-one) if you need help with something.

However, we've noticed that lately all of these different options have been sparsely attended. So I'm wondering, what do you want from WPS? Is there something else we should be doing that would be of more interest to you? Or are you only interested in passive on-screen entertainment? Let me know how we can spark more enthusiasm and participation from you. Send me or any of the WPS board members an email, please. And most importantly, please be active and participate!

Till next time, may you always see beauty in your viewfinder.

Fuat Baran, *President*

COVER PHOTO

SNOWFIELD

By *Nancy Faulds*

This is a field in my neighborhood that is part of a farm that has not been worked for many years. These furrows only show up after a light snowfall, as if the land is reminding us of its past as an active farm.



inFocus

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Dick Budnik, Web Edition

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newsletter: infocus@wpsphoto.org
www.wpsphoto.org

Westchester Photographic Society
Meets 12 months a year, on Friday evenings at 7:30 pm (excepting school holidays). **Meetings are virtual now until further notice. Start time is 7:30 pm.**



Member of



FRIDAY EVENING PROGRAMS

February

- 2 Carl Walsh, “A Photojournalist’s View of the Natural World”
- 9 Members’ Critiques
- 16 Competition 4B (Theme: Frame Within a Frame)
- 23 Fuat Baran, “Macro Photography”

March

- 1 Process the same image in Color and B&W
- 8 Competition 5A
- 15 Harvey Stein, “Ways of Seeing”
- 22 Anastasia Tompkins, “Trip to Paris”
- 29 No Meeting: Easter

April

- 5 Competition 5B (Theme: Wabi-Sabi)
- 12 Sapna Reddy, “Landscape Photography”
- 19 Members’ Showcases
- 26 Annual Members Meeting

May

- 3 Competition 6A
- 10 Joel Morgansky, “What is a Good Photograph?”
- 17 Ken Salstrom, Lewis Bogaty, “Iceland”
- 24 TBD
- 31 Competition 6B (Theme: ICM)

June

- 7 Brian Clamp, “Gallery Nuts and Bolts”
- 14 End of Year Competition
- 21 TBD
- 28 Process the same image in Color and B&W

July

- 4 No Meeting: Independence Day
- 11 Fuat Baran, “Facebook and Instagram”
- 18 Members’ Showcases
- 25 TBD

Check the WPS website (wpsphoto.org) for recent changes.

Contact Information

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome and should be addressed as follows: If concerning the WPS Newsletter, In Focus, address comments to the editor at infocus@wpsphoto.org. If concerning our website, address comments to our webmaster, Dick Budnik, at webmaster@wpsphoto.org. All other comments should be addressed to our President.

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COMING UP



Carl D. Walsh on February 2 A Photojournalist’s View of the Natural World

Bio

Carl D. Walsh has been a working photojournalist since 1984. He has collaborated with a range of national and regional publications, working on stories addressing a broad subject matter. Assignments about the natural world are closest to Carl's heart and capturing the beauty of birds and other wildlife was one of his earliest photographic inspirations, something he passionately pursues to this day. The appearance of a lost Asian Steller's Sea-Eagle in the New England prompted one of his raptor chases. Carl's image of this giant eagle was lead art for the National Audubon's story about the Steller's cross-continent saga. Another of his bird images was recognized in the Audubon Photography Awards. In addition to birds, Carl has photographed a variety of animal species and will include some images from his bear, mountain gorilla and whale stories.



Fuat Baran on February 23 Macro Photography

Macro photography is the art and skill of making extreme close-up images of small objects or parts of objects. Macro photographs typically represent objects at life size or greater. In this presentation, Fuat will give an overview of macro photography and discuss the tools and techniques that will allow anyone to experiment with this genre of photography, with or without specialist gear. Fuat will share some of his favorite photographs, mostly close-ups of common objects.

Bio

Fuat is the current president of the Westchester Photographic Society and a member of the Riverdale Art Association. For the past dozen years Fuat has been taking one photo each day and posting them online as part of a community of “Project 365” photographers on Flickr. He also participates in weekly Macro Mondays challenges on Flickr and recently has combined his interests in abstract photography, macro photography, and acrylic painting into a project to make extreme close-up images of paint and textures on canvas. He can be found on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/thebiblioholic> and on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/thebiblioholic>.



AREA MUSEUMS/GALLERIES

Metropolitan Museum
www.metmuseum.org
 Met Collection

Museum of Modern Art
www.moma.org
 An-My Lê
 Between Two Rivers
 Through March 16, 2024

International Center for Photography
www.icp.org
 ICP at 50
 Through May 6

New York Photography Diary
<https://ny-photography-diary.com/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/>
 Many Exhibits

Three NYC Galleries

Clamp
<https://clampart.com>

DanzigerGallery
<https://www.danzigergallery.com>

Yancey Richardson
<https://www.danzigergallery.com>

WPS GROUP EXHIBITS

**Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center
 Northern Westchester Hospital**
 What a Wonderful World! Oh Yeah!
 Running through March 2024

WPS MEMBER EXHIBITS

**Lewis Bogaty, Jennifer Dooley &
 Dennis Thornton**
 have photos in the upcoming
 Uostream Gallery exhibit
 "Ordinary & Extraordinary"
 February 1 to 25
 Reception Feb 4 (2 to 5 PM)
<https://www.upstreamgallery.com>

WPS FIELD TRIPS

<https://www.wpsphoto.org/members-field-trips>

**More Photo Opportunities
 in the Field Trip area.**
 Stay tuned for more
 information on these
 upcoming trips!

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS

Please log on to websites
 to see the entire schedules.
 Many events are available online.
 Also see last page.

Hunts
<https://edu.huntsphoto.com>

B&H
<http://www.bhphotovideo.com/find/EventSpace.jsp>

Adorama
<http://www.adorama.com/alc/events>

SPECIAL INCENTIVES

A MEMBERS-ONLY DEAL!

**Susan Magnano has offered special
 pricing on many of her workshops.**

**If you are a WPS member,
 click [HERE](#).**

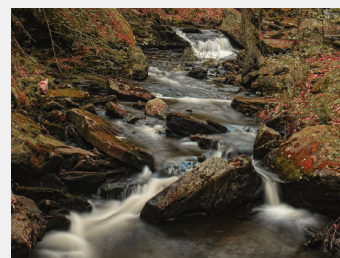
CURRENT EXHIBITS

Northern Westchester Hospital

**Theme: What a Wonderful
 World! Oh Yeah!**

(runs through March 2024)

For more information contact
 Arnold Breisblatt at abreis@aol.com.



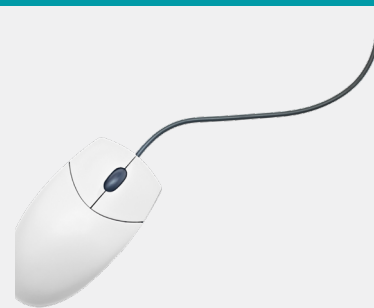
TIPS

How to find
 your mouse
 cursor 2

by Kenneth Salstrom

When watching a demo, it can be difficult to see the presenter's cursor on the screen. This is how you can make it more visible. I have been using this for years on different versions of Windows. It also comes in handy when you are using multiple monitors and are not sure where your cursor is.

See page 13 for the continuation of this technique!



The Competition Corner

By Dennis Thornton



Searching for the
 "Photographic Truth"

Dennis Thornton

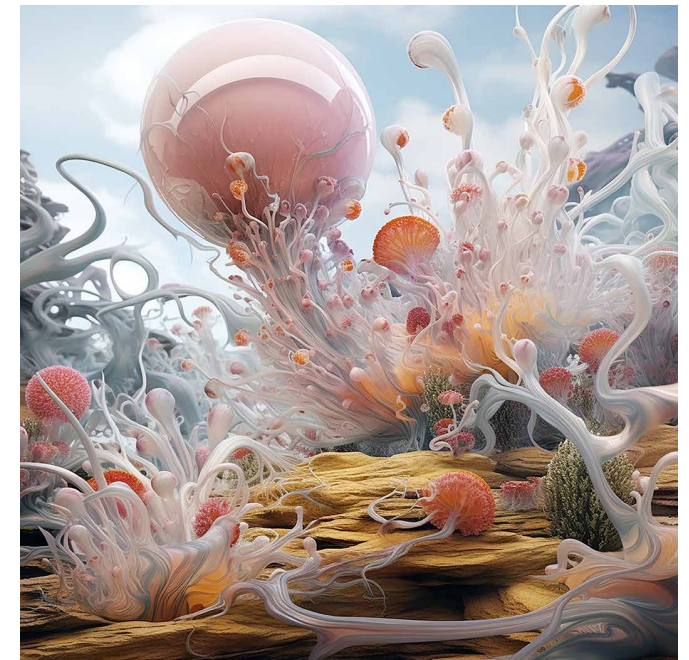
Many of us were captivated by the club presentation "Midjourney AI and Generative Fill" given by Joel Pollack. On one hand, many were grateful for and intrigued by a organized guide of the various AI programs. Joel also provided interesting examples of his own AI assisted creations. The potential for artistic exploration was made evident. Others may want to kill the messenger for opening the door of awareness of the potential that AI has for changing the very element of photography, in ways we may not want to embrace.

There is no denying that AI is here, that AI is already having a significant impact on photography and that AI is here to stay. You can already find articles about prestigious photo contests being won with AI generated images. In two cases, a German photographer with the handle "cheeky monkey" and then an Australian group with the non de plume of Jan Van Eych (a tongue-in-cheek reference) each won the top awards. Both readily acknowledged their photographic alchemy and returned their prizes. Their Instagram posts conveyed that their aim was to underscore the dilemma photography faces.

Separately, the World Press Photo Contest initially published one standard on the use of AI, and then quickly reversed itself, in response to significant backlash. Keeping up with changes, in life and with rules, is daunting. There are powerful digital manipulation tools already available and utilized as part of the standard digital workflow. Now, the advent of increasingly powerful AI capabilities prompts us to question if what we are seeing is truly believable.

Recently, I viewed a YouTube video by the popular photo blogger Thomas Heaton, who discussed how photographers were caught "cheating" when submitting images into photo contests around the world. Although not specifically about the use of AI technologies, his discussion noted that all contests have rules. Some rules are loose and others may seem ridiculously strict. But navigating the specifics of each contest can be challenging enough, and be impossible if, like most people, you don't read the rules in the first place.

The primary mission of our competitions is to have fun by providing a friendly competitive forum for members to share their work. The Competition Guidelines provide an overall structure for helping navigate the process. The embedded



rules define the relatively few dos and don'ts. Following the rules is beneficial in making the experience enjoyable for all, and is, in spirit, based on the honor system.

This article is intended to try and explain WPS competition rules, particularly in reference to digital manipulations. WPS has tried to walk a middle-of-the-road path when it comes to exclusionary rules for our "traditional" digital categories (i.e., Black & White and Color). Competitors are informed that entries are expected to have a "traditional" appearance, like images produced by analogue processes, and not appear to have been overly worked in any type of digital software. And that there is an expectation that the "photographic truth" of the original capture be maintained.

The phrase "photographic truth" was already embedded in our competition rules when I joined the club, over 20 years ago. I don't know exactly when it was originally written in, but it is certainly not a new concept. However, there was no clear interpretation for the phrase provided. Looking at documents provided by the Photographic Society of America (PSA) I found this term referenced. My best interpretation is that its origins stem from photojournalism. It seems self-evident that presenting an altered image, in that context, could have significant negative consequence. PSA has extended the concept of photographic truth into other areas, such as their nature category. A premium has been placed on presenting images just as they were captured, without post-capture manipulations.

How does this pertain to our competitions? WPS competitors are allowed to utilize techniques like dodging, burning, color adjustments, and other strategies that are part of the standard digital workflow. These actions can be seen as strategies to “enhance” but not fundamentally “transform” the image from its original capture. This can be seen as the essence of maintaining the “photographic truth.” You can read the full text in the Competition Guidelines, section 3.1 and Addendum 3.1.

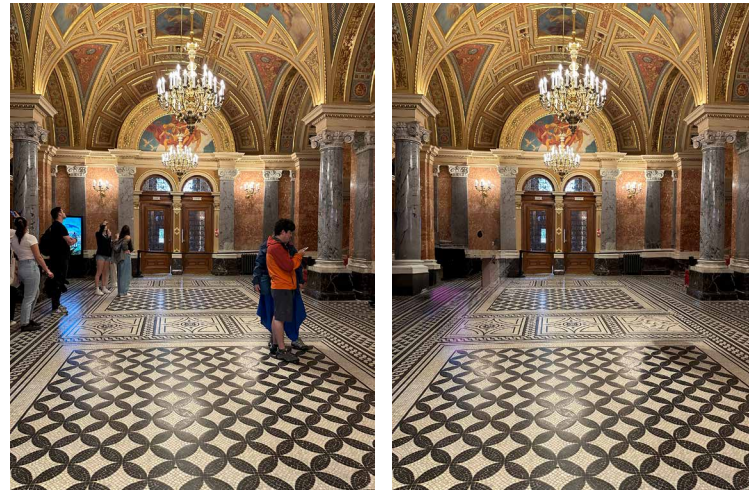
Let’s take a basic approach to the question, What is permitted and what is not? In the service of striving for “photographic truth,” we are expected to not alter the image in such a way that the average viewer would remark that the image “reads” significantly differently from the original. One way in which the “read” would be altered is by introducing elements that were not present in the original capture.

Example: You have a seascape scene, and you decide to composite in a large bird, fisherman, boat, or celestial body. The insertion of any type of stand-alone element can fundamentally change the way the viewer “reads” the image. It doesn’t matter if you have brought in and composited in “your own” bird, fisherman, boat, or moon, mined a stock photography bank or used “promptography” to generate the object. If it wasn’t present in the original capture then it shouldn’t appear in an image submitted in a traditional competition category.



While occurring less frequently, the excessive removal of elements also has the potential of being problematic. Yes, we have all been browbeaten to appreciate the necessity of cleaning up our competition images of otherwise distracting elements. But at what point does the intent to enhance the image by removing bright spots along the edges or the piece of garbage in the foreground transition from cleaning up to the point of significantly changing how the image is read, violating the photographic truth?

Example: You have a scene of pond with ducks swimming about. You “clean up” debris, bright spot and decide to “simplify” the image. The two ducks that appear merged are removed. Getting carried away you clone over or use generative fill to eliminate all of the ducks. Now, the image no longer reads as ducks in a pond. It’s just a pond scenic. That’s violating the photographic truth of the original capture.



Example: You shoot a city/street scene but, damn, there are too many people. How many people can you clone/generative fill out before the image is “transformed” not just “enhanced”? No longer a typical busy street scene but an image that may be read as an unrealistic abandoned street.

The first photograph on record, by Daguerre in 1839, of a Paris street shows a single man standing, having his shoes shined. The exposure took 10 minutes. All of the people in movement, on this otherwise busy street, disappeared. That was the photographic truth of his original capture. Not altered in post-processing.

If you think that you are beginning to understand the rules, well let me confuse you a bit with what may present as a contradiction. While we are not allowed to introduce standalone elements, some time back we did decide to allow sky “replacement.” What were we thinking?

Sky replacement was among the first digital global alteration options that crested the horizon of photographic manipulations. The logic, faulty or not, was that you are “substituting/replacing” one sky for another. The assumption (logic) is that a sky already exists in the original capture. It’s an even swap. However, putting in another sky, yours or one provided by a software company, where no sky previously existed, would not be allowed. So, replacing one sky for a better one can be seen as enhancing the image, not transforming it. Is this a bit of double talk? Maybe! But substitution is different from creating de novo. The other deciding factor, again at that time, was that the sky replacement technology had advanced to the

point of being a one-click operation. It was executed so seamlessly as to render it very hard to detect. If it’s so available and people are already using it, then trying to hold back the tide seemed like a fool’s errand. Don’t make a rule that you cannot, or are not willing, to enforce. Right or wrong, we can’t put that genie back in the bottle.

What is the bottom line when it comes to the “photographic truth” in our traditional categories?

- First and foremost, images must be created by you, the photographer, by photographic techniques, not created, in whole or part, via “promptography” or any other form of AI assisted technologies.
- We can utilize digital tools that help “enhance” the original capture but stop short of “transforming” it. The waters are inherently muddied by the element of subjectivity.
- We are not allowed to use compositing to overlay a texture or introduce new elements, regardless of the source.
- We are not allowed to use any type of AI technologies to create or “generate” new content. If it wasn’t in the original capture, then it shouldn’t appear in images submitted in our competitions.
- We are not allowed to use any type of AI technologies to create or “generate” new content. If you have doubt, keep this axiom in mind. If it wasn’t in the original capture then it shouldn’t appear in an image submitted in our traditional competitions.
- The corollary is that we are not allowed to remove so many aspects/elements as to “transform” how the image is read. Again, that’s subjective, but it is your fellow competitors who will evaluate that question should the image be challenged.
- Either by the process of addition or subtraction of elements/content, the average viewer looking at your original capture and your final product, side-by-side, should perceive a strong continuity between the pair. Viewers should not react to nor be overly impacted by the disparities between the two presentations. In short, the presented image should “read” fundamentally the same as the original. Any alterations should blend in naturally and not draw undue attention, by virtue of their visual weight, psychological impact, etc., as this could be seen as significantly changing the way the average viewer would read the image and therefore constitute a violation of the photographic truth of the original capture.

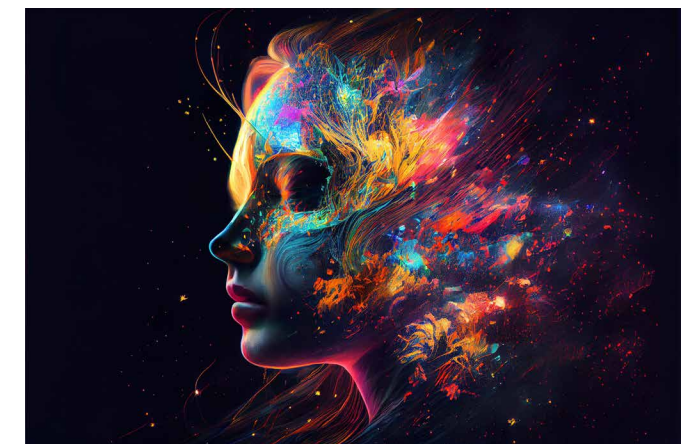
- We are permitted to substitute/replace one whole sky for another, providing a sky was present in the original capture.
- We are expected to treat competitions for what they are, a congenial club activity to engage ourselves for the sake of having fun, mutual sharing and a learning opportunity. We engage ourselves and expect others to engage themselves with the presumption of good faith.

I’m sure that there will be some niggers who will want a definition for every term used, and/or will strive to point out the inconsistency in some positional statements, or challenge the proposed “logic” of rules that allow certain applications in one instance but not in another. One can always find flaws and contradictions. And yes, you are entitled to carp and chew the cud of criticism until the cows come home. But nothing is perfect and that is evidently true for human behavior/logic and competition rules.

Advances in photo technologies and AI in particular present daunting challenges to the fundamental concepts of photography. Everyone is talking about this issue and other clubs are grappling with how to react. Virtually every club, that I am aware of, has chosen to prohibit the use of digital tools based on generative AI models. WPS is following suit and is adopting this fundamental position, not to allow the use of generative AI models.

Who knows what the future will bring. Clearly, there is no stopping the process of change. I think that this is the best we can do, in the moment. Maybe, with the assistance of AI technologies and Mr. Spock at the helm, we will someday have competition guidelines and rules that are perfectly logical and acceptable to all.

What are your thoughts about the use of generative AI technologies?



DIGITAL BLACK & WHITE

DIGITAL BLACK & WHITE



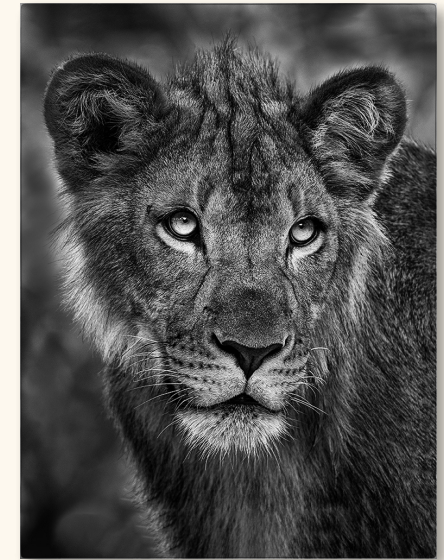
Dennis Thornton, First
Margaret on Rock



Mitchell Druck, Second
Black Knights



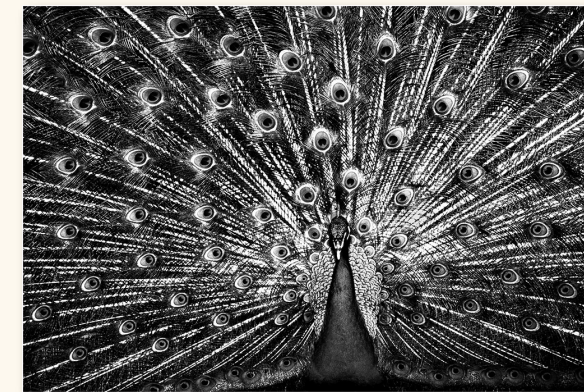
Carlotta Grenier, Third
Relaxing at the Spa



Anastasia Tompkins, HM
Almost King



Linda Austrian, Second
Rose in Black & White



Lois Barker, HM
Peacock in Full Feather

THEME: BACKLIT



Lewis Bogaty, First
Cardinal



Mitchell Druck, Second
Backlit Egret

THEME: BACKLIT



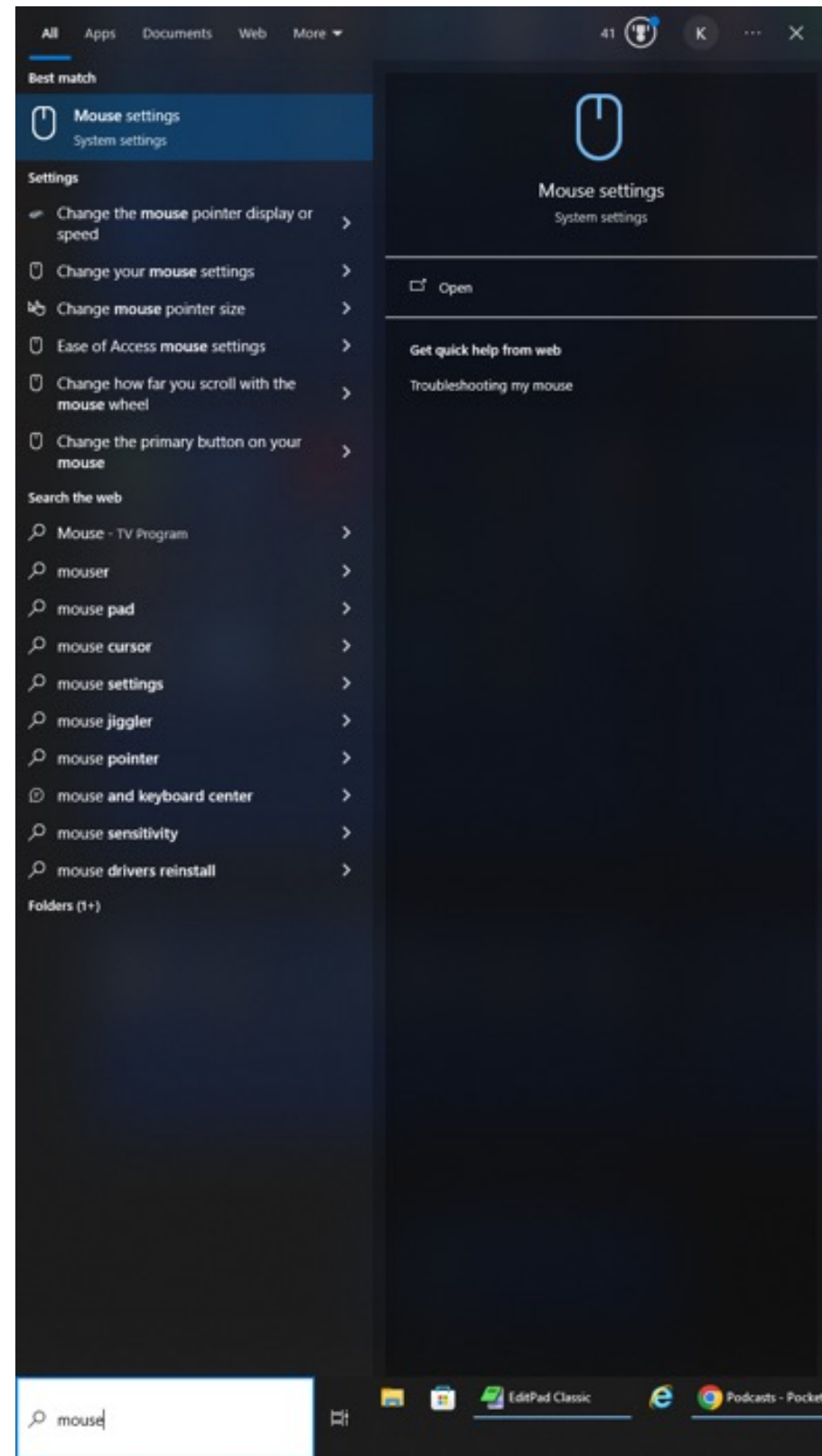
Jackie Ross, Third
Sunrise Tern



Barbara Kapetanakes, HM
Sunrise Silhouette

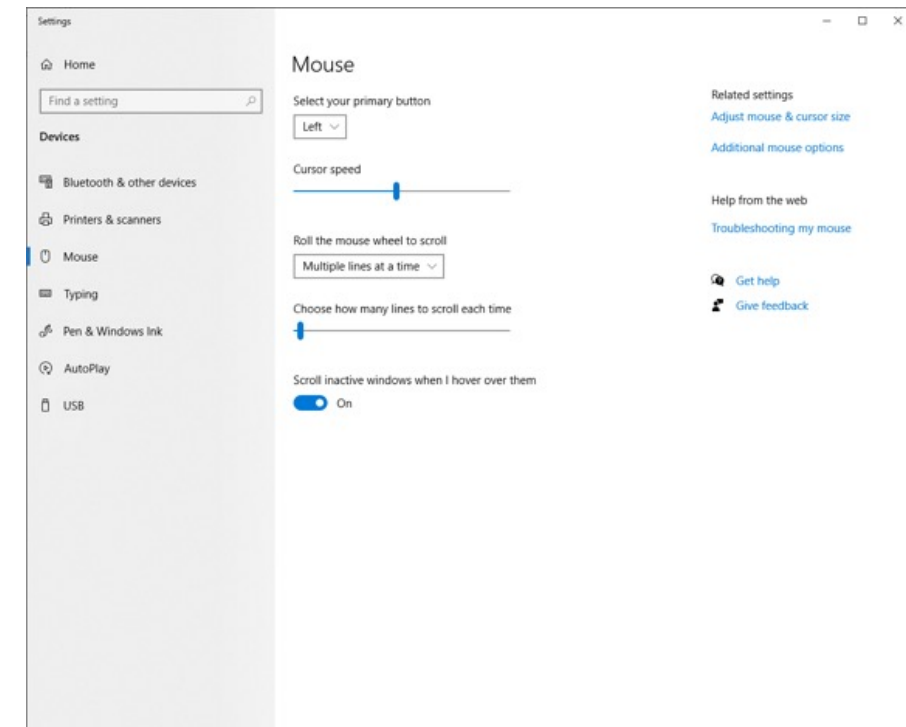
How to Find Your Mouse Cursor (continued from page 3)

Open the search box on your task bar, search for Mouse, and select it from the list.

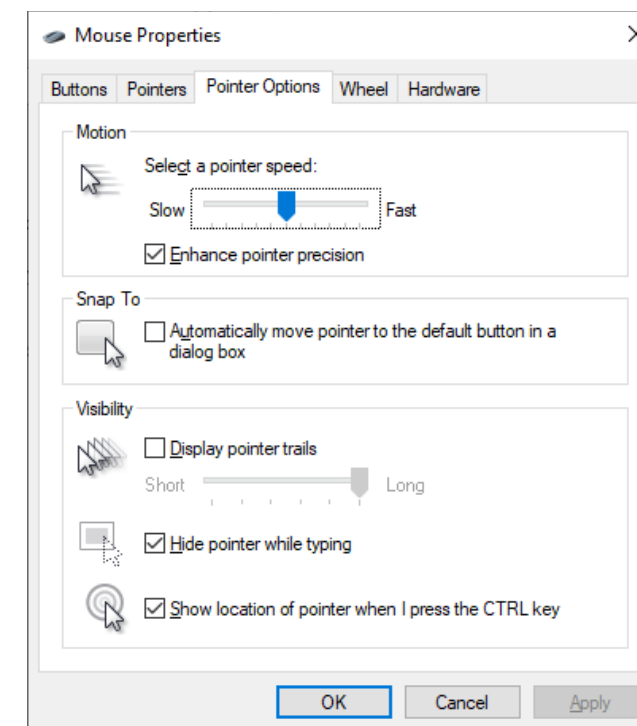


The mouse settings will open.

From the links on the right side of the page select “Additional mouse options.”



In the Pointer Options tab, at the bottom select “Show location of pointer when I press the CTRL key” and select OK. It actually shows the cursor when you release the control key.



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Westchester Photographic Society

Ron Carran, editor

P.O. Box 405, Ossining, NY 10562

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