

# The New f-STOP

Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Arkansas Outdoor  
Photographers Club

JUNE 2021



AOPC Meetings:

There will be no June meeting (Zoom or otherwise) but please see the articles in this newsletter for links to **this year's previous Zoom meetings.**

THURSDAY, JULY 15th,  
6:30 P.M.

We hope to have an in-person AOPC meeting, in Room 65 of **Little Rock's 2<sup>nd</sup>** Presbyterian Church, featuring longtime AOPC member David Lewis as our speaker. Further information to be sent closer to the July meeting date.

## The President's Message

by

**Ron Russ**

I've got to admit, when I get an email from the AOPC President, I keep thinking it is coming from somewhere else. But in fact, I sent it. Why is this the case, you might say? I could blame it on the cold medications I'm taking, but in reality it has nothing to do with it. It seems like yesterday that I joined AOPC when in fact, it was 1997. I saw a sign up sheet at the seminar for AOPC, and I signed up thinking it was well-established. When in fact, it was just beginning. At the time my equipment was a Canon AE1 program with a kit lens. One of the things was that I met Jason Crader at that seminar, by the way. But that is another story. One thing I remember from that seminar was to buy the best equipment you can afford. While I was using a hand me down camera at the time, I remember Jim Gerlach, one of the presenters, saying to me that one day you'll buy better equipment. It seemed far off at the time, but I was thinking, OK. As it turned out, over the years, I have bought better equipment, for what I can afford. Currently, I use a Canon 7i, with several different lenses. **cont. on page 2 ....**

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But, I still think in terms of what I can afford and how many images I tend to take. If you would have told me back in 1997 that I would be club president I wouldn't believe you (or I would have laughed). Brings me full circle though as to today though. Where will we be 25 years from now? Time will tell. It always does.

## HIGH PROFILE: BILL SMITH – FREE SPIRIT MAN

By Cindy Dawson

Bill Smith is another long-time AOPC member. In fact, he was right there at the beginning of the formation of the Arkansas Outdoor Photographers Club, and with others was instrumental in getting it off the ground. Bill remembers meeting and talking with Matt Bradley, a local professional photographer who also became an AOPC member, way back in 1996 or 1997, about how there wasn't an outdoor photography club in Arkansas but that there should be. And for decades now, there has been. Thank you, Bill, for all your help and involvement.

Bill's preoccupation with outdoor photography stems from his love of the outdoors, but unlike many photographers, his interest did not begin in childhood. He first became interested in photography in 1976 when, as an adult, he was on a trip to Idaho where he had an elk hunting permit. His first camera, the one he used on that trip, was "not a good one," a Petri 35 mm camera with a 50 mm lens, but he nevertheless became enthused with the slides and photos he took. Bitten hard by the bug, he upgraded after he returned from his trip and bought a Canon AE-1. He later bought one of the first autofocus Canon cameras, an EOS 620. He has stayed with the Canon brand ever since, having also had a Canon 5D, 5D-III, 7D, and 7D-II. His current favorite lenses are a Canon 600mm f4 and a Canon 100-500 mm. Photography is his main hobby, and if circumstances had been different, he would have liked to have been a professional photographer.

While Bill got into photography because of his interest in outdoor photography, he has done some portrait photography and some sports photography. In the Perryville area where Bill and his wife lived, he took sports photos at local junior and senior high school football and basketball games and sold them through a website. He connected with other sports photographers, including Ted McClenning, who joined the club at Bill's invitation.

Bill's photographic journey led him to a fascination with videography. He bought one of Canon's first 3-chip (RGB) cameras but more recently has acquired a Canon R-5, which Bill finds to be the ideal camera for him. Bill says that camera can do it all, certainly all Bill wants it to do – stills, slow-motion and great videography. Bill intends to combine all those products and start a YouTube channel as well as put items on his Facebook page. He has a name for it already: Dakota's Travels with Free Spirit Man. He may be looking to acquire an R-6 camera body so he can have cameras already fitted, each with one of his two favorite lenses. Because of the weight, Bill uses a tripod, a Gitzo with a Wimberley head. He sometimes will also use a bean bag resting on his lowered car window to shoot from the car.

Another feature Bill likes about the R-5 is its "animal eye" focus choice, something that appears to appeal to many photographers. He says it is wonderful for getting excellent bird shots. Bill's favorite subjects are outdoor photography, including wildlife and birds, especially birds in flight (he likes the challenge).

Bill is retired, well, mostly anyway, from his work as an independent computer programmer and his wife passed away a while ago. Now Bill is ready to become a nomad with his travel buddy, Dakota, a German

shepherd who had been dumped a couple years ago when Bill found her. He has had her spayed, microchipped and fitted with a GPS tracking unit, although Bill says she rarely gets 20 feet away from him.



The duo have become well-equipped with a Jeep Cherokee and a fully self-contained housing unit fashioned from a 6 X 12-foot cargo trailer. Bill and Dakota will soon be hitting the road with the intent to travel around the west and to live at least part of the year in New Mexico. The set-up is just the right size for them, providing a bed, air conditioning, a microwave, toaster-oven, TV, fresh water and gray water tanks, and two generators. The trailer is light enough to pull on forest roads and other off-the-beaten path places out west.

While Bill's favorite place to photograph is Yellowstone, Bosque del Apache (those sandhill cranes!) and the desert southwest are also favorite haunts. His favorite place to photograph in Arkansas is the Ouachita Mountains since he knows them so well. The place he would most want to go for taking photographs where he has not yet been, is Alaska. A user of Lightroom, Bill would like to know more about Photoshop, mainly so he could enhance his images to be their very best.

Bill enjoys black and white photography and counts Ansel Adams as an influence but he has a variety of living photographers whose work informs his own. One is Steve Mathias, who takes good wildlife photos and has great owls as a specialty. Bill has become a big fan of YouTube and the photographers and other nomads whose work and ideas are found there.

Bill has a philosophy about photography: when you capture a special moment in time, it can last a lifetime in your mind. We will be looking on YouTube for Dakota and Free Spirit Man, who will be capturing those special moments in the great outdoors.



# AOPC MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

By vote of AOPC officers, anyone paying dues for 2020 or 2021 will be considered to be a current AOPC member. This is to provide additional value to club members in recognition of the fact that the COVID-19 virus disrupted club activities for the past year and that members have therefore received less value for their dues than they would receive in a normal year. Hopefully, we can get back to regular meetings later in the year.

Dues cost \$20 for an individual membership and \$30 for a family membership. If you are not sure if your membership is current for 2020/2021, please contact club treasurer Nick Dawson at [nickdaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nickdaw@sbcglobal.net). Dues can be paid either by mail to Nick Dawson, 8 Brodie Circle, Little Rock, AR 72211 or by paying online through our website [www.aopc.info](http://www.aopc.info). Any mailed dues should be accompanied by your current email address.

## RECAP OF AOPC ZOOM MEETINGS IN 2021

### NICK DAWSON'S JANUARY ZOOM PROGRAM: BICYCLING THE MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL IN NORTH DAKOTA

At the club's meeting In January, 2021, Nick Dawson started out the AOPC year with his Zoom presentation on photos he took while on a cycling trip in North Dakota on the Maah Daah Hey Trail, called North Dakota's best kept secret. Nick, the treasurer of AOPC for the last few years, has also served the club as president, vice president, and projectionist. Nick updated a program he had given in person to the club several years ago, but this time discussed not only the photo gear he took with him on his bicycling trip, but also what gear he would take if he were on the same trip in 2021.



Nick's trip was with Western Spirit, a company that specializes in leading and supporting bike excursions in the western U.S., including some in pretty remote locations. Nick has undertaken several trips with that company, which was started by a woman from Arkansas. Since the Maah Daah Hey Trail is remote and less visited than most parts of the lower 48, Nick's photos of the area and his commentary are quite informative, especially to many of us who have never been there and who are not that likely to ever visit, on a bike or otherwise. Ads for the trail say it is for the adventurous outdoors enthusiast, providing a taste of pure, unadulterated badlands.

Nick's North Dakota program is available for viewing on YouTube using the following link: <https://youtu.be/3OrNkGqkTXU> .

### **BOBBY BURTON'S FEBRUARY ZOOM PROGRAM: YELLOWSTONE IN WINTER**

Our longest serving past president, Bobby Burton, an excellent photographer and outdoor enthusiast, gave a great program in February on Wintertime in Yellowstone. He noted that he and Brandi, his wife, started visiting Yellowstone in winter a few years ago, and that it is quite a different proposition being there in winter rather than some other season. Preparation is the key.

Bobby gave us the benefit of their experience, discussing the topics of weather, proper clothing to take, driving routes, preferred vehicles, considerations if flying there, lodging and food, camera gear, and animals. This wealth of information would be useful to anyone contemplating a trip to Yellowstone in winter. Not only that, but Bobby's glorious photos of the Yellowstone landscape and wildlife are just simply beautiful to see. Love that shot of the fox coming down the snowy hill! And all the others.



When it is hot and humid out this summer, or anytime, click on this link to see Bobby's program:

<https://youtu.be/-V0zsO8dNhs> .

## JASON CRADER'S APRIL ZOOM PROGRAM: 25 YEAR PHOTOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

Jason Crader, one of our great AOPC past presidents, gave the club's April, 2021 meeting presentation, by Zoom, on the topic of "A Photographer's Perspective: 25 Years of Photography Explained in 25 Photographs." Jason is a teacher, a photographer, a long-time member of our club, and someone who has a good bit of wisdom and philosophy about photography to share. He selected one photo from each year of the approximately 25 years he has been into photography. Jason has delved deep into wildlife, wedding, and street photography, and he provided tips and ideas to go with each photograph, some of which are his favorites and some are definitely not, but are good illustrations of certain concepts.



Jason said he has grown up in the club, since he was just a kid when he became involved with the club and its members. He was one of the original members of AOPC and he remembers meeting Ron Russ at the Gerlach seminar when there was first mention of forming a club. Jason noted that photography efforts mature along with the person, so this was a good look back through the years and what has been learned. And yes, there is a cow photo in the mix.





For those who don't know, Jason as a young photographer started out photographing cows at his parents' farm and he would delight attendees at many of the AOPC meetings with one or more of his cow photos during our open projector sessions. You might call him the Cow Whisperer.

It was an engaging presentation and it was followed by some good discussion about the club and how it has brought new ideas, improvement, inspiration, and joy to those involved. For those who missed Jason's program, and the discussion, you will want to see this worthwhile program. View it at <https://youtu.be/m5NUNOyHIk>.

### **DAVID FUQUA'S MAY ZOOM PROGRAM: MY PANDEMIC YEAR IN PHOTOGRAPHS**

David Fuqua, an illustrious past president of AOPC and a long-time member, gave an interesting Zoom program on the photographs he took during the pandemic. Like so many others, David found his travels and activities curtailed. Photography is one of the activities that he could still enjoy, but the pandemic and its accompanying limitations affected the kind of photographic subjects he chose. Some of them were backyard birds, his two adorable grandkids, and the family dogs (one seemingly always in motion and the other more sedentary). He also had time to develop some of his photographic techniques and to renew his enthusiasm for photography. He found himself with some interest in going back to some of the basics (for example, the manual that comes with the camera), so that he could delve deeper into what his camera is capable of doing. He also spent time doing some macro photography.



Over the pandemic year, David was able to document in fascinating photographs the life cycle of Monarch butterflies, since he has several varieties of milkweed, on which they rely and evolve, on his property.

You can relate it to your own pandemic year experience and enjoy David's presentation. It can be viewed on at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FH4xHfoN8ic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FH4xHfoN8ic).

# PHOTO SHOWCASE

## MAY 2021 FIELD TRIP TO CHEROKEE PRAIRIE NATURAL AREA

By Cindy Dawson

On Saturday, May 22, 2021, AOPC sponsored a field trip to Cherokee Prairie, an area of original tall grass prairie, located outside of Charleston, Arkansas. We had the entire prairie to ourselves and enjoyed walking through a part of it. The highlight of the prairie, for us, anyway, is the abundance of wildflowers of many kinds. Coneflowers, purple and otherwise, were prolific, but also spotted were Indian paint brush, wild roses, tickseed, baptisia, Queen Anne's lace, and a great many more. AOPC photographers present included Bill Smith (with his dog Dakota), Robert Herron, Helen Jones, Karen Moore and Cindy and Nick Dawson. Karen is lucky enough to live in the general area so she met us on site. Others met up along the way at the Workman's Travel Center on I-40 at Ozark, apparently a very popular place and a crossroad for travel in a number of directions. Some photos from our trip are printed in this newsletter issue. The club visited the prairie for a field trip at least 5 years ago, and it is still a delightful place for photos, not having changed much, if at all. The only negative was the I-40 traffic tie-ups due to road construction on the way back to Little Rock, but Highway 64 was a perfectly good and interesting substitute, taking us into Conway where we were able to resume I-40 travel.

*(all Photo Showcase images taken by Robert Herron and Nick Dawson)*

















# FUTURE AOPC FIELD TRIPS

## JUNE

We will join Bedford Camera & Video for their field trip to Wildwood Park and meet at the park. See their invite below:



Thursday June 24, 2021  
6:00PM - 8:00PM



ASAN  
WOODLAND  
GARDEN

BOOP  
WATER GARDEN

BRUCE  
GARDEN

BUTLER  
ARBORETUM

SWAN  
LAKE

RUTH ALLEN  
DOGWOOD TRAIL

WILD-40  
TRAIL

ZAHN  
ROCK GARDEN

**20919 Denny Road  
Little Rock, AR 72223**

## AUGUST

We will take a drive to the “ghost town” area of Calico Rock, on the White River, in north-central Arkansas, on **Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup>**. The eastern part of this picturesque city has been abandoned and will make for a great opportunity to take photographs of the old characterful buildings. We will meet at the commuter parking lot at the I430/I630 interchange at 7:00 a.m. for the 2 1/2 hour drive to Calico Rock. If you don't want to convoy, meet us in Calico Rock about 9:45 a.m.

## ADVANCE NOTICE OF PHOTO EXPO IN THE ROCK 2022!



### 2021 AOPC OFFICERS

- President — Ron Russ, [aopcpres@gmail.com](mailto:aopcpres@gmail.com), (501) 416-3206
- Vice-President – Cindy Dawson
- Secretary/Treasurer – Nick Dawson (501)221-9118 [nickdaw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nickdaw@sbcglobal.net)
- Webmaster - Bobby Burton

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