



One Member's Steps with the Sandhills Photography Club

Before moving to Whispering Pines in 1988, my husband and I subscribed to The Pilot and I found Bill Stoffel's Creative Photography Class at Sandhills and Sandhills Photography Club listed in the calendar section. Both appealed to me because I already had an SLR camera that was used to photograph scenes and objects to be included in my artwork and I had been a member of Capital City Camera Club in Raleigh.. So, as soon as we moved, I joined both, just in time to go on my first Photo Field trip to Cades Cove. Fran and I met the other members and had a wonderful time.

Little did I know what a difference the Photo Club would make in my life! I had always been very bashful, but here I was taking part in exhibitions and competitions, making my own prints in a darkroom in my garage, cutting mats, framing photos, going on all the field trips, participating in photo workshops and creating the monthly newsletter.

*Then, I was elected President! I also found that
I WAS NO LONGER BASHFUL!*

After Bill Stoffel, founder of the Photo Club passed away his wife, Kaye, came to me with all of Bill's class notes and asked me to carry on the work Bill had started, which I gratefully accepted. So, another chapter of my life, teaching, began. Encouraged by my friends Gisela Danielson, June Margeson and June White, I taught the first of many classes entitled, "Creative Photography, The Bill Stoffel Method". The classes caught on like a wildfire and I taught most of the photo club members, 4-H clubs, art groups, NC State extension staff and club members in the county, district and state, O'Neal students and even the Pinehurst employees! What fun that was!

Over the years, I served in most all officer positions (President twice), Workshop Chair, Field Trip Chair, Slide Competition Chair and whatever else I was asked to do.



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*Now, here are some interesting facts. When I joined the Photo Club, cameras were totally **manual**. We had to set the **aperture, shutter speed, film speed, focus**, exposure, EVERYTHING! We usually shot slide film because most competitions used slides. Some were print competitions and prints were shown on a light box with exactly the correct light to best show the photos. The light box was made by Jill Margeson's Dad, Chris Christianson, one of the most experienced members ever in the club.*

Color printers, color monitors and Photoshop didn't exist. Home computers were very basic with very small amounts of system memory and no hard drives, only just big floppy disks about the size of a 45 music record! Yet, we all succeeded in producing excellent slides and prints! Looking back, that was really amazing!

When digital photography arrived, Bill Matthews and I were the first club members to try out the new, but still very basic technology. We each had a digital point and shoot Olympus camera that took fairly low resolution photos. But we proudly showed the club what could be done and had a great time playing around with our new cameras.

During the last 10 years I haven't been very active in the club because of several reasons such as my husband's bad health and death and later, my inability to see well enough to drive at night, but the club is still very important to me and I will continue my support as a member and in any other way I can.

Thank you for giving recognition to all of us old timers. It means the world to me!

By Linda Piechota 1988-Present



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