

## 2024 Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award

The Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award may be awarded to one or more members by the Board of Directors in recognition of at least five years of outstanding contributions to the spirit and objectives of the club. The Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award embodies the name of the founder of the Southern Appalachian Nature Photographers organization and is the premier award of the SANP.

**Selection:** The Board of Directors may, when appropriate, identify one or more members for the Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award to be presented at the next annual meeting of the club. The Board may appoint a standing committee to periodically evaluate member contributions and recommend candidates to the Board for the award. The committee will accept recommendations for the award from the general membership and will consider those recommendations in its evaluations. Deceased members and members who made significant contributions to the club prior to implementation of this award may become candidates for this award.

**Presentation:** The Distinguished Service Award shall be presented at the annual meeting of the club. As a preamble to the current award presentation, the names of all previous recipients of this award shall be read as a reminder of the volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to the club. The current award shall be presented in the form of verbal accolades accompanied by a certificate and an engraved desktop memento or comparable item worthy of prominent display. Also, a brass plate with the current recipient's name engraved shall be added to a perpetual plaque carrying the names of all recipients of this award and this plaque shall be displayed at the presentation and future large gatherings of the club.

The Awards Committee for this award consisted of David Boruff (Chair), Ann Barber, and Kristina Plaas. The committee recommended that the 2024 Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award be presented to two members this year. The Board of Directors approved their recommendation and further approved the inclusion of two additional awards to commemorate the distinguished service of two members who received recognition in 2022 prior to the establishment of the Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award.

## 2024 Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award

### Ron McConathy

#### From Dale Potter's Nomination:



Ron McConathy is a former president of SANP and a charter member of SANP. He has always been involved in some aspects of SANP. Ron has been a board member. He has taken on whatever tasks assigned to him by the Board and volunteered for other activities. In recent years with the changes in administration, Ron has been actively involved with the nominating committee for Board members. He has also chaired several other committees.

He has been the only person to maintain and manage the SANP Zenfolio website. When Covid hit, Ron offered his Zoom subscription for the club to use for club meetings and the online digital salon. At some point, the club offered to split the cost with Ron, but he never asked, instead he offered it at a time when the club needed the ability to view meetings.

When I became the salon director because no one was willing to do it, I sent out an email to the Board members of suggested changes. Ron supported the changes and thanked me for reaching out to the Board. He has supported numerous changes to the salon and other activities that have allowed SANP members to become more active as a member. Ron has taken an active role in the club's Facebook page. Ron has opened his home to field events while spending time teaching members how to focus stack or learn intentional camera movement. These events have gone over well with those attending as Ron has the natural ability to teach and share his knowledge of photography. Over the years Ron has helped with the Salon and stepped up to organize and plan the first Salon on Zoom. Ron has helped judge and offer advice on how to improve an image.

Ron started the Photo Challenge which has helped get SANP members involved in taking photographs that can be judged. This has allowed members to participate in photo activities and learn how to improve their images. Ron has written numerous articles for SANP newsletters over the years. These articles were informative and educational. Ron has stayed on the cutting edge of photography equipment. He made the transition to mirrorless long before most were ready. He has shared his experience with the latest camera equipment resulting in some of us spending more money on a camera than I had planned to. Ron's sharing of his knowledge about mirrorless and the Canon R5 resulted in me changing from the DSLR and it inspired me to become more interested in photography.

Ron is not your typical secretive photographer. Ron is willing to share his knowledge and help those who ask him for help. He has offered ideas and advice about field trips. Ron is an inspiration to those who have conversations with him about photography or photography equipment. He was an inspiration to those that took his classes at UT. Ron never hesitates to speak to or greet those in the club. From my personal perspective, he is a great inspiration to those who have had a chance to share photography with him.

**Ron's contributions to the Club:**

- **1999 – 2003: Served as Club president.**
- **1995: Initiated, organized, and managed the first SANP Salon Competition. The SANP Salon has continued since that time. It was inspired and organized like the Lockheed Martin Camera Club (now the Camera Club of Oak Ridge) annual salon competition.**
- **1997: Developed and published a Guidelines for Ethical Nature Photography document for SANP that is still in effect today and published on the website.**
- **1998: Coordinated the SANP Fall Color Spectacular Photography Weekend on Santeetlah Lake.**
- **2000 - 2013 and 2018 – 2022: Served on board of directors.**
- **2001: Developed a Guidelines for Judging Photos document for use by salon judges that is still currently in use.**
- **2007 - Present: Initiated and managed the club's use of the Zenfolio website as a gallery for display of salon entries and winners, and images from field events and photo challenge events.**
- **2020 – 2023: Shared the use of his personal Zoom teleconferencing account with SANP.**
- **2021: Hosted three Focus Stacking workshops at his home.**
- **2022 – Present: Developed and managed a program of quarterly Photo Challenge events.**
- **2023: Hosted an Intentional Camera Movement Field Event at his home.**

## 2024 Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award

### Brad Cottrell

#### From Dale Potter's Nomination



Brad Cottrell had been involved with SANP long before I became a member in 2007. He was leading field events for SANP. While I was not able to attend his field events due to my work schedule, he shared his field events documentation and notes with me when I started leading field events. Brad has been like Ron. Over the years he has stepped up and handled whatever task was assigned to him. Brad has stayed active with the club doing whatever was requested of him. Brad's (and Ron McConathy's) work and leadership have been especially valuable to SANP since COVID.

What most SANP members do not know is how bad our club was with the organization, with memberships, with dues, with our IRS, and our state charter. While we had a lot of money in the bank our organization part of the club had fallen apart. Most members were unaware because there was no transparency with the Board or Club Members.

Brad stepped up as membership chairman and took over a paper system that was totally inadequate and not current. Our membership was in the low 90s when he took over as membership chairman. Brad started greeting people at club meetings. He started getting the membership roll up to date. That was not an easy task. Brad has tried to encourage the club membership to become more diversified.

Brad knew how the club operated and that change was not something easy to accomplish with SANP as the resistance to change had resulted in the decline of club membership. Brad had an idea. An idea so outrageous for SANP, that I was shocked that he managed to get the Board to agree to the idea. Brad approached the Board members individually and convinced them to support his idea for Wild Apricot. Brad along with Sharon McConathy managed to put together one of the best websites for any photography club. This accomplishment might not seem that great, but it is one of the turning points for SANP. There have been a lot of ideas over the years that never got presented to the Board because members were told to go through the President.

There have been Salon directors who gave up after a year or two of trying to suggest changes to the Salon because they were told the Board said no to ideas that had limited cost.

Brad has served as system administrator for Wild Apricot and while he has handed off those duties, he is still the de facto system administrator. He has spent considerable time making sure that various aspects of Wild Apricot work as they should for SANP. He has set up the online registration for the Salon which has been very beneficial and eliminating waiting to see if a check was really in the mail. He has set up the online payment of dues, so a member no longer must question the status of their membership. Membership has increased to the highest level ever for the club.

Brad has set up a page for the Lightroom workshop, that not only collects the payment when someone registers but it allows those registering to select their lunch option.

Brad has been active in several other aspects of the club, from serving on various committees and being a valuable asset to assisting on those committees to reaching out and encouraging members to become involved with SANP. Brad has assisted with the Salons from preparing scoresheets and assisting with making sure all the details are covered to assisting on the digital and print side of the salons. Brad assisted with making sure the first online Zoom salon worked, and was instrumental in acquiring a grant from Microsoft to replace Zoom with Teams and Microsoft Office 365.

Brad has worked behind the scenes by reaching out and asking members to take on various roles in SANP. Brad doesn't hesitate to ask someone to become involved or be active with the club. He has followed up with new contacts in the club to encourage them to join. This past salon Brad made sure that we had all the details covered. For the last two print salons he has laid out a plan to make the most efficient use of the panels for hanging prints so that all the prints are displayed on the panels. Brad is willing to share his photography knowledge with others, but his organizational skills have been exceptional and what SANP needed. Brad and Sharon Cottrell have cleaned up many of the administrative issues that had lapsed when they took an active role in getting the club's paperwork straightened out. Several club members do not understand why we have an Oak Ridge mailing address when we have always met in Knoxville. What they do not realize is how much work and effort has gone into making the club more organized, more efficient, and more transparent. The Massey Award is an idea that Brad had because he thought the club should start recognizing members who have contributed to advancing the club. Having been aware of the situation of the club in previous years, and the positive changes that have occurred in the last four years, especially during COVID, Brad has contributed far more than most will ever know or grasp. He has helped put SANP on a positive path of growth and transparency. He has stepped up and used his leadership and knowledge to benefit SANP.

## 2024 Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award

### Kendall Chiles



Since mid-2006, Southern Appalachian Nature Photographers has been fortunate to have Kendall Chiles serve as its president. During that time, the club has remained steadfast in its mission to provide a friendly, welcoming and informative organization for all who love nature photography. Over time the club has evolved, as some members have left and others have joined, bringing fresh thoughts, expectations and ideas. Many of the new members were invited to join SANP while taking non-credit courses at the University of Tennessee taught by Kendall. During the years Kendall was president, the digital photography age was in full swing, with sensor and software technology growing by leaps and bounds, with the arrival and use of mirrorless cameras and even the advent of high-quality cell phones emerging as tools of the craft. Post processing evolved from hours spent in a darkroom to time in front of a computer screen with increasingly powerful editing tools at everyone's fingertips. These have been sources of challenges and opportunities for SANP. As you may know, Kendall was one of the last to embrace "the digital age of nature photography," but he never let his preferences influence the direction of the club, and eventually he joined the digital ranks!

Finding members who treat nature photography as an art rather than a social media snapshot opportunity has made keeping SANP a vibrant organization a bit of a challenge. With his contacts not only in our area but throughout the nation, Kendall has been instrumental in bringing in many accomplished photographers to share their wide array of knowledge and skills with the club, providing insight into the art of photography, the technical aspects of photography and the changes in photography. The club has offered field trips, wildlife and nature seminars, and other photo opportunities to its members.

The annual salon has seen a growing number of digital images entered over the years as the SANP Board added categories such as "travel and place" and "people in nature," inspired by club members' interest in these areas. Our salon continues to promote photo printing and black and white nature photography—areas that might be considered passé to outsiders but remain popular among our members. SANP has strived to keep the art of nature photography alive and relevant.

Obviously, Kendall didn't do all these things on his own, but with his leadership and the help of many dedicated nature-loving photographers and club members, he has been a valuable asset to the Southern Appalachian Nature Photographers. As an organization we owe Kendall our gratitude for his years of service and dedication to our club.

## 2024 Chester A. Massey Distinguished Service Award

### Sharon McConathy



Sharon McConathy has been associated with SANP since its early years. Although her work in support of SANP has often been behind the scenes, the results of her work and her impact on club operations have been abundantly visible for two decades.

Sharon served as newsletter editor from 2002 to 2006 and again from 2014 to 2021. She has taken the newsletter from its early format as a simple one-page plain text document to the multimedia publication that we are accustomed to reading today. In the recent member survey, the question about the newsletter received responses of, “it’s fabulous,” “looks fantastic,” “best one I receive,” “I look forward to every one” and “truly exceptional.”

In 2009, when someone was needed to manage the SANP website, Sharon stepped up and filled that role for the next twelve years. She has provided excellent website design and maintenance services to support the changing needs of the club throughout those years. In 2020, during the transition to our new website with its integrated membership management system, she met the challenge with dedication and determination to make it our best website ever. The beautiful website that you enjoy today is the result of her creative redesign and meticulous organization.

Sharon’s work on the newsletter and the website has undoubtedly benefited the club in many ways. The newsletter has provided members with timely information about upcoming events and activities as well as educational articles to help our members improve their photographic skills. New members are continuously drawn into the club by the attractive newsletter publication. The design of the new website has brought welcome benefits to both club members and staff. The convenience of online dues payments and event registrations on the new website is a major enhancement to daily club operations, and the overall attractiveness of the site is appreciated by everyone.

Sharon has retired from her service as newsletter editor and website manager, where she displayed the finest example of excellence throughout her tenure. We are grateful that we can look to her legacy as a standard for our own work in the future.