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# Competition honors life of local photographer

**By Chris Kocher**  
ckocher@gannett.com  
Staff Writer

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His daughter, Peg, recalls how he'd go to almost any length to get the striking landscape photos that he wanted — even if that meant bending a few ideas about safety.

"Throughout my entire childhood, we had to follow him to the highest point in any landscape so he could take a picture. That would be up fire towers coated with ice, or mountains or hilltops or whatever," she said in an interview last week. "That sort of formed my perspective on life. You talk about 'big-picture thinking,' but that was quite literally being dragged to see the big picture!"

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per company Azon in Johnson City, he also was a woodworker, a peace activist, an environmentalist, an amateur historian and an avid swimmer. He once went on a whitewater rafting trip down the Colorado River and, over the years, broke a long series of major bones — including most of his ribs.

See **COMPETITION** Page 5

## IF YOU GO

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► **Where:** Cooperative Gallery 213, 213 State St., Binghamton

► **When:** Show opens Friday. Gallery hours are 3-9 p.m. for First Friday (when photo judging will occur), 3-6 p.m. other Fridays, noon-4 p.m. Saturdays. A closing reception will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 29; the public is invited.

► **To learn more:** [www.cooperativegallery.com](http://www.cooperativegallery.com)

## OTHER HAPPENINGS AT FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK

In addition to the Bob Johnston Memorial Photography Show and Competition at Cooperative Gallery 213, this month's First Friday Art Walk in Binghamton includes other highlights. All events run from 6 to 9 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

► **Imagicka** (corner of Washington and Hawley streets) will host a book-signing. David Reid Lowell is author of the book "Michel Speaks," which gives insights into modifying existing "internal scripts" to create new scripts, enabling personal growth. Also, tarot readings by Jenne, \$10 for 10 minutes. More information: [www.imagicka.com](http://www.imagicka.com).

► At the Preservation Association of the Southern Tier (89 Court St., Perry building), the "Eyes on Five" exhibit will highlight five local endangered landmarks: Carnegie Library, Stone Opera House, Broadmoor Hall, Masonic Temple and original IBM complex, featuring photos, historical information and current status of these buildings. More information: [www.pastny.org](http://www.pastny.org).

Free BC Transit Trolley rides will be available, starting from the Phelps Mansion Museum (191 Court St.), with a historic tour led by Carol Hawley of the Preservation Association of the Southern Tier at 6 p.m.

For more information on First Friday, visit [www.gorgeouswashington.com](http://www.gorgeouswashington.com).

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### STATE STREET

► **Anthony Brunelli Fine Arts** (186 State St.): "7 Years," anniversary group exhibition featuring drawings, paintings and sculpture (through Jan. 29).

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### WASHINGTON & SOUTH WASHINGTON STREETS

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See **WALK P**



# COMPETITION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Still, he never seemed happier than when snapping photos or holing himself up in the darkroom at his Binghamton residence, a timber-framed house he designed and built himself. His black-and-white images — mostly of nature scenes or urban settings — rarely featured people in them but still managed to convey a sense of humanity, said Susan Kendrot, who with husband Dick curated a 2009 exhibit of Johnston's photos.

When Johnston died in May at age 93, his family and friends mourned a man who squeezed every drop from the moments he'd been given. (Some people, Peg Johnston noted, didn't even realize he was that old — his hair never went gray, and almost to the end he was scampering up and down ladders to set up shots and repair this or that thing.)

Everyone agreed that some kind of memorial was in order and that it should be associated with Binghamton's Cooperative Gallery 213, of which he was a founding member. After rejecting a plaque, Peg Johnston (also a photographer) and other gallery members decided a photo contest would be an appropriate way to honor him.



**"Winter Light,"** by local photographer Bill Gorman, is one of the entries in the Bob Johnston Memorial Photography Show and Competition.

About 20 or so contest entries are expected this week for the Bob Johnston Memorial Photography Show and Competition, with the entrants viewable from 6 to 9 p.m. on First Friday. Winners also will be announced that evening, with judges' top choices splitting the contest's prize money.

That the competition encourages others to pursue their shutterbug tendencies makes perfect sense to Janet

Normile, the gallery's president. She recalls Johnston as a humble man always willing to share his knowledge of photography with others.

"He always made you feel special. You encountered him, and he greeted you with a huge smile and his eyes sparkled. He always made you feel like you were the most important person at that moment," Normile said. "He was a very clever guy — I knew him in

his 80s, and he was still fitting the gallery, doing solo shows, working like any other member worked."

Susan Kendrot said that she and her husband were recruited to oversee the exhibit to take the burden of selection and coordination off the nonagenarian's shoulders. The Kendrots visited Johnston's home, only to find hundreds of photos from which to choose — and because he often employed photographic paper he had squirreled away decades previously, it wasn't always easy to tell which prints were new and which were 40 or 50 years old.

"We thought, 'How are we going to go through all of these, yet alone choose any?'" Susan Kendrot recalled with a laugh. "But somehow it worked out."

Dick Kendrot praised Johnston's superb sense of composition that ran consistently throughout all his work.

"He had an eye for capturing things on film," he said. "The photos are dramatic but never just for drama's sake. They convey the emotional reaction he had to the scene — that's what we realized when we went through all his work."

He hopes the photo competition can continue for years to come and believes that Johnston would be pleased with that legacy: "Bob gave us a lot of pictures — it's someone else's turn."





SOUTHERN TIER'S ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

# GOOD TIMES

[PRESSCONNECTS.COM](http://PRESSCONNECTS.COM)

## A SHUTTERBUG'S LEGACY

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STORY, PAGE 2



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1-6-2011

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The Cooperative Gallery 213 is sponsoring a tribute to the art embodied in the photography of Bob Johnston, a founding member of the gallery who died in 2010. This photography show and competition is open to all photographic media and all photographers. Photographs will be judged by the following criteria expressed by Bob Johnston in his artist's statement:

*A camera is a wonderful instrument for forming a two-dimensional record of whatever is within the scope of its lens. Depending on where we point it and what we include in the view finder we can single out those aspects of the physical world that create emotions for us: a sense of calm and serenity or perhaps excitement, terror, awe, loneliness, humor, joy, etc.*

*Part of our reaction to any picture stems from abstract shape and form (composition) and is almost instinctive. Our emotional response to a lovely curve, pleasing proportions or strong vertical, horizontal or diagonal lines seems to be universal and to cut across cultural lines.*

*Another part of our reaction depends on the subject matter itself. Based on our lifetime experiences and our imagination we may feel the excitement and perceived danger of a trip through thunderous rapids, the god-like view from the top of a mountain, the quiet of a walk in the woods, the joy of spring, the stimulation of people in action, or the quiet calm of winter snow. For me, the successful photograph is one in which both the abstract elements and the subject matter of the image reinforce each other to provide an emotional experience for the viewer.*



"Gaspé" Photograph by Robert C. Johnston

THE BOB JOHNSTON  
MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW  
AND COMPETITION  
JANUARY 6<sup>th</sup>- 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011



## ENTRY FORM

Each entrant may submit up to 3 photos with an entry fee of \$10 each. The open themed show will be judged and cash prizes will be awarded to First, Second, and Third Prizes. Photos may be sold and the standard 20% commission will be paid to the gallery.

All photos must be framed and ready to hang. Two non-adhesive labels must accompany each entry with Title, Name of Photographer, Medium, Price using Arial 14 pt. type on a label no larger than 2"x3" (labels in envelope attached to wire is recommended). In addition, name and complete contact information must be affixed to the back of each photo.

Submissions may be dropped off at the Cooperative Gallery 213 State St. Binghamton NY on Sunday, January 2nd & Monday, January 3rd at specified times. Photos must be picked up by Sunday, January 30th or Monday, January 31st times TBA.

**For more information contact:**

**[info@cooperativegallery.com](mailto:info@cooperativegallery.com)**

**or, call (607) 724-3462**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**JANUARY 6TH-29TH, 2011**



Photograph "Eons of Erosion" by Robert C. Johnston

# THE BOB JOHNSTON MEMORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW AND COMPETITION



## SUBMITTING GOOD NEWS!

If you have an item for Good News, send it to the Press & Sun-Bulletin, attn: Good News, P.O. Box 1270, Binghamton, N.Y. 13902-1270, fax it to 352-2645 or send an e-mail message to: [goodnews@pressconnects.com](mailto:goodnews@pressconnects.com). Please include a contact name and phone number.

# OUR PEOPLE

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PRESS & SUN-BULLETIN | [pressconnects.com](http://pressconnects.com)

## Gallery hosts tribute to versatile artist

A Renaissance man is gone, but his admirers won't let him be forgotten.

Robert C. Johnston, who died at the age of 93 in May, was a record-breaking swimmer, inventor, archivist, chemist, as

well as an award-winning photographer and founding member of Binghamton's Cooperative Gallery 213 on State Street.

It's in his memory the gallery will host a photography show

and competition that's open to all in January.

"We would like the show to grow over time to a national competition," member Bill Gorman said.

Johnston was bitten by the photography bug as a youngster. That first Leica camera gave way to ever-more sophisticated equipment, but he stayed true to his early passion for black and white images.

Those prints won wide acclaim. But Johnston's flair for photography encompassed only one aspect of the multi-dimensional man.

After graduating from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and



Photo provided

**Peg Johnston with her late father, Bob, at the State Street gallery that will host a tribute show and competition in his memory.**

working as a chemist at Ansco in Binghamton, World War II hit. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a meteorologist while stationed in England for the duration.

He returned to the area, and eventually began working at Azon, a blueprint paper manufacturer in Johnson City, becoming technical director.

He got his masters and doctorate degree in chemistry from what was then SUNY-Binghamton.

During those years and long after, he was chalking up patents mainly, but not exclusively, involving the treatment

of sensitized paper. His inclination to reuse and recycle prompted many of his more mundane inventions.

"He used to cobble little things together," explains daughter Peg Johnston. She remembers his fasteners for boxes, bleach-jug lampshade for his darkroom and the sharps jar he made when her mom, Patricia, was diagnosed with diabetes.

His talented hand also designed and built furniture and a timber-framed house on the South Side of Binghamton. He also built a cabin in Keene Valley by hand.

The word "retirement" was lost on him. At age 90, he set a national record in the 200-yard backstroke during a Binghamton University Masters swim meet. He had been a member of the team for decades.

He continued to march in local parades under the Veteran for Peace banner, affirming his lifelong loyalty to social justice, the environment and peace.

In the months before his death, he completed archiving one of the largest extant Civil War correspondences, that of letters that passed between his paternal great grandparents.

Peg Johnston inherited many of her father's proclivities, she said.

### TO LEARN MORE

A tribute show and competition honoring the late Bob Johnston will take place from Jan. 6-29 at Gallery 321, 321 State St., Binghamton.

Open to all photographic media and all photographers, the open-themed show will be judged and cash prizes will be awarded. Photographs may be sold, with the standard 20 percent commission paid to the gallery.

Each entrant can submit up to three photos with an entry fee of \$10 each. Submissions may be dropped off at the Cooperative Gallery 213 on Jan. 2 and 3.

See [www.cooperativegallery.com](http://www.cooperativegallery.com) for an entry form and submission information. Email [info@cooperativegallery.com](mailto:info@cooperativegallery.com) or call (607) 724-3462 to learn more.

She, too, is immersed in family history and is a photographer in her own right. She had the advantage of many years at the dining room table, scrutinizing photos with her father and coming to understand what he sought to attain in a photograph.

"His goal was to unite form and content of the photo and the emotion an image produced," she said. "When they were all in balance, that, to him, was a successful photo."

Neighbors columnist Valerie Zehl can be contacted at [vzehl@gannett.com](mailto:vzehl@gannett.com).

## GOOD NEWS!

### WHITNEY POINT

#### Photo contest winners announced

Jim Johnston of JW Johnston Photography recently judged more than 275 photos that were entered in to the 2010 Whitney

Point Fall Festival Photo Contest that was held at the Big Tent Cultural Center.

The winners are as follows: Adult Group

► People/Places category: first place, **Christa Boice**; second place, **Paige Warfield**; third place, **Eloise Westcott**.

► Pet category: first place, **Ted Crawford**; second place, **Ann VanOrman**; third place,

#### Patricia Crawford.

► Abstract category: first place, **Rena Leet**; second place, **Annette Hand**; third place, **Ann VanOrman**.

► People's Choice category: **Melissa LaPadula**, **Ted Crawford**, and **Heather Burlison**. Youth Group

► People/Places category: first place, **Marissa Taylor**; second place, **Keeli Raup**; third

place, **Brianna Fuller**.

► Pet category: first place, **Holden LaPadula**; second place, **Holden LaPadula**; third place, **Brianna Fuller**.

► Abstract category: first place, **Anna Warfield**; second place, **Anna Warfield**; third place, **Hailey Piech**.

► People's Choice category: **Sylvia Rosa**, **Holden LaPadula**, and **Samantha Holcomb**.