

Summary of the VVAG Photo Group Survey

The VVAG Photo Group survey, available from Oct. 27 to Nov. 14, received 21 responses with helpful feedback from members. Several of the high-level themes are:

- members would like the group to change in positive ways,
- meetings should focus on learning opportunities and a discussion of member-submitted photos,
- most want the group to be a “welcoming environment” for all skill levels and interests that might engage new members, and
- many expressed interest in local in-person instructional sessions and photo outings.

Reasons for Joining. 85% of respondents joined the Photo Group for “learning opportunities” with “meeting/socializing with other photographers” and “gaining inspiration from other members” being the next two highest responses. This is consistent with 75% saying their photography skill is at a beginning or intermediate level.

Meetings. More than 70% enjoy learning opportunities and discussing submitted photos at group meetings. Aside from scheduling conflicts, members frequently “only attend monthly meetings for topics [of] interest” and “want more participation/discussion” at meetings. There are clear requests for a variety of presenters and topics at meetings, more member participation and more hands-on learning opportunities. 85% want meetings held monthly.

Zoom option. More than 60% want future meetings held over Zoom or a similar platform, or a combination of in-person and on-line meetings, with comments that Zoom meetings are “easier to schedule” and “a virtual attendance option” would be great. This aligns with feedback from members who are only in the Vail Valley part-time, live at a distance or don’t want travel at night/in winter for meetings. Zoom meetings would allow us to invite speakers not located in the Valley.

The third Thursday of the month was the most selected option for meetings. Some comments want meetings to start earlier: “perhaps...have the presentation when meeting starts...socializ[e] afterwards.”

Communication. Members are divided on the email listservs as some still like them and a number vocally complain about “too many emails” and would like the group to find “better ways to collaborate and share images than 1995 email list technology.” Members value “the ability to share photos and see others images,” which exist in alternative technologies.

The majority do not like when certain members “talk[...] down” to others or “belittle” others’ art: One said “Emails that insult other forms of photography...are offensive.” Another said the group “needs to be revamped into a welcoming environment to discuss photography... We should be able to have our work discussed and not belittled.”

Instruction and Group Outings. 85% of members are interested in local in-person instructional sessions and 90% would like to participate in photo group outings (i.e., casual meet-ups to photo together).

Appreciation. Lastly, two responses specifically acknowledged and thanked Rick Spitzer for his efforts on behalf of the Photo Group.