

August 18, 2023: Night Sky Photography Workshop Recap

written by Chris Guibert | August 20, 2023

The [August 18th Night Sky Workshop](#) was the third photo workshop this summer at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge and the eighth workshop of 2023. We offer night sky photo workshops every month of the year as part of our [educational initiatives](#) for the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#).

NIGHT SKY PHOTO WORKSHOP

JOIN PHOTOGRAPHER TOM OLIVER FOR A DARK SKY PHOTO WORKSHOP
IN THE KEWEENAW DARK SKY PARK



KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

AUGUST 18, 2023 - 8:30 PM



LODGING GUESTS FREE • \$75 PUBLIC • LIMITED AVAILABILITY

KEWEENAWMOUNTAINLODGE.COM FOR DETAILS

[Tom Oliver](#), a former KML team member, now working in outreach for Michigan Tech, instructed the class of eleven appreciative learners from across the Midwest. Tom has a very engaging and enthusiastic teaching style and knowledge of the Keweenaw Dark Sky Park that makes him a great fit for instructing these workshops. These classes are broken into two segments: an inside presentation and an outside, hands-on portion.

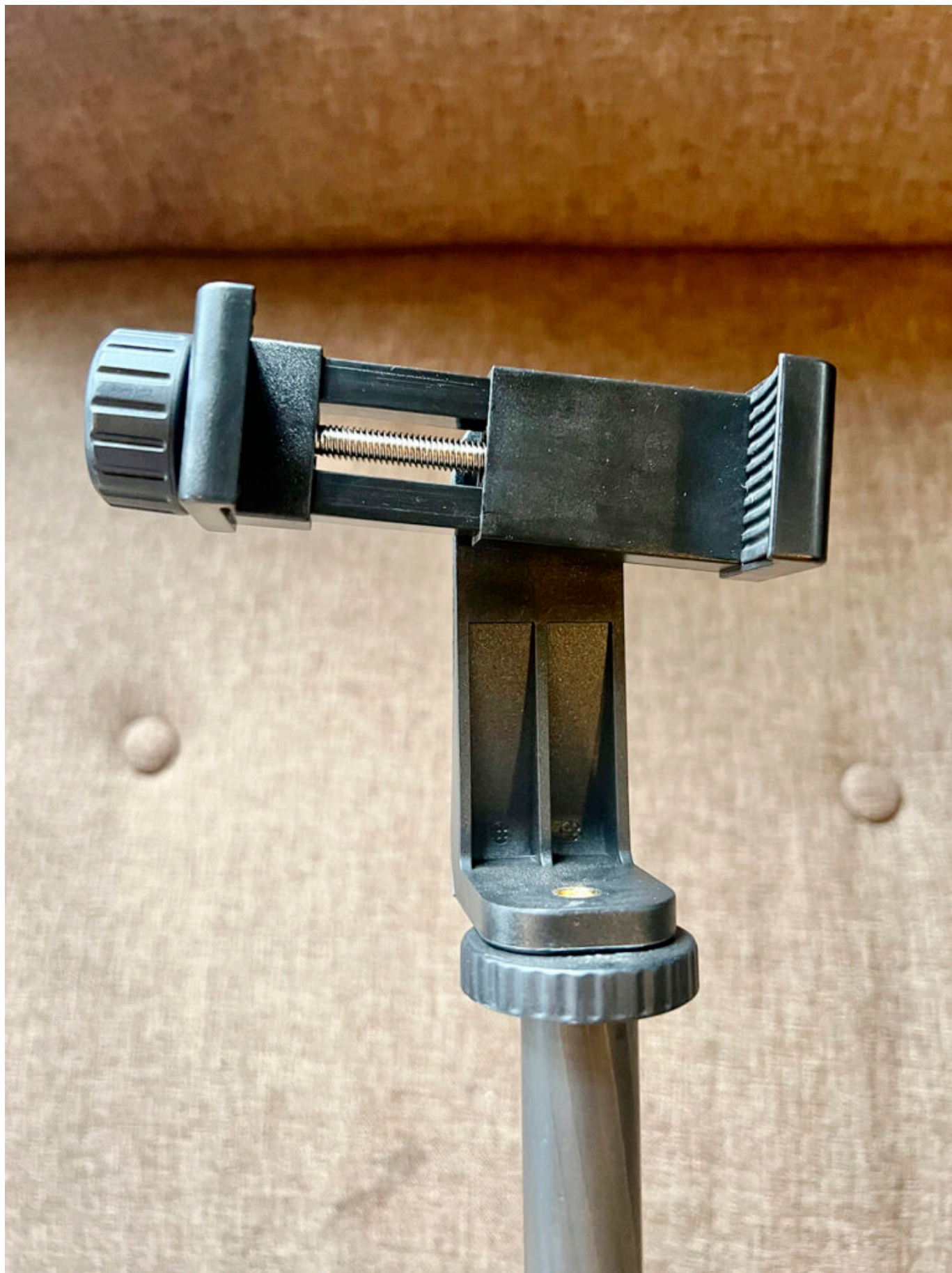
The class started at 8:30pm and Tom launched into a digital slideshow covering topics like: preparations for a night sky photo shoot, astronomy basics, camera settings, and picking good locations.



The “inside” part of the workshop takes place in the Lodge’s Banquet Room.

Even though I have been a professional photographer for over

twenty years, I always try to *be fearless and persistent in learning on a daily basis*, which is one of the [core values](#) of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. For this workshop I wanted to try to get a good picture of the night sky with my [iPhone Pro Max 13](#). Many guests come to the workshop with just their phones and I wanted to expand my skill-set of using a phone for night sky photography. The OAC recently purchased a [Kobra Tech](#) tripod mount to hold smartphones for photography. I have been wanting to test this mount out so I thought the outside portion of the workshop would be the perfect time to test the mount.



The Kobra Tech smart-phone tripod mount.

As Tom was finishing up the main presentation I ran outside to check the weather. It was 10:10 pm and there was still some twilight blue sky to the west and north.



The Lodge at twilight.

I suggested to Tom that we hold off for about 20 minutes for total darkness before bringing the group outside. "Does anyone want to see my presentation on the Northern Lights?" Tom asked. The group, eager for knowledge, enthusiastically said "Yes!". We finished up inside around 10:30pm and headed outside. It was dark with just a little smoke in the air from the Canadian forest fires. The core of the Milky Way was already looming over the southern horizon. Tom and the group headed over to the fairway of Hole 5 of the golf course to work on capturing images of our home galaxy.

I decided to head to the front of the Lodge to do the test of the Kobra Tech phone holder. I set the phone to capture a 30 second exposure in a raw digital format file. This type of file would give me the best post-processing capabilities in Photoshop later. I then shot it with my Canon 5D Mark IV with a 2.8 L 16-35 III lens attached. I used these settings: lens set to 16mm focused on infinity – ISO 3200 – 15 seconds at 2.8.



Image information: iPhone Pro Max 13 – Settings: ISO 3200 – 30 seconds f1.8 – lens set to 13mm – photo by Chris Guibert



Image information: Camera: Canon 5D Mark 4 – Lens: Canon 16-35 L III Settings: ISO 3200 – 15 seconds f2.8 – lens set to infinity – photo by Chris Guibert

As you can see the Canon camera had a superior image quality. Since this is just my first test with the iPhone on a tripod I still need to do some more experimenting. Afterwards I did some web searching and found this [article](#) stating that “Night Mode isn’t available when the 48-megapixel setting is on”. This made me rethink what I did and what I need to do next time.

I circled back to Hole 5 to meet with Tom and the rest of the group. Tom was working with a couple from downstate on their first night sky photos they have ever taken. They were ecstatic with their results. The wife had given this trip to her husband as a birthday surprise since he was interested in learning astrophotography. It was dark and I could not see their faces,

however, I could feel the smiles on their faces. They were done for the night; happy with their results. Tom walked over to another individual to give some pointers while I walked back with the couple towards their [cabin](#). “Thank you, thank you, thank you for offering these classes,” the wife exclaimed! “You are welcome!” I joyfully responded, “This is what we love to do.”



[Chris Guibert](#)

Chris Guibert: I have a strong passion for all things outdoors and have worked as a tour guide and professional photographer for the last twenty five years. As the Lead of Outdoor Activities at the Mountain Lodge I want make sure you and your family have a great experience while staying and playing. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the trails, regional activities and local secrets.

