



Winter Waiting



GRACE frozen and in flight: blue heron, and mature (top photo) and immature bald eagles, below and formations in ice, at right and in background, captured by Stephen Datnoff.

Cold, yet keen for a new aviary perspective

It's a brisk 30 degrees outside, but the sun is shining. I need all of the available light when photographing eagles. It's that time of year where somewhere around 165 eagles winter over in the Columbia River Gorge, the Klickitat River and Glenwood.

- Long johns — check
- Insulated boots — check
- Sweater — check
- Insulated coveralls — check
- Fingerless gloves — check
- Warm hat — check
- Spare camera batteries — check
- Tripod — check
- Long lens — check
- Backup camera body — check
- Gasoline in the car — check
- Eyeglasses — check

Now I'm out the door in search of those birds as I found out that blue heron hang out, too.

I usually head to the Balfour Park, just west of the Klickitat River off of Highway 14. The eagles hang out there, on the sand bar or just up in the air depend-

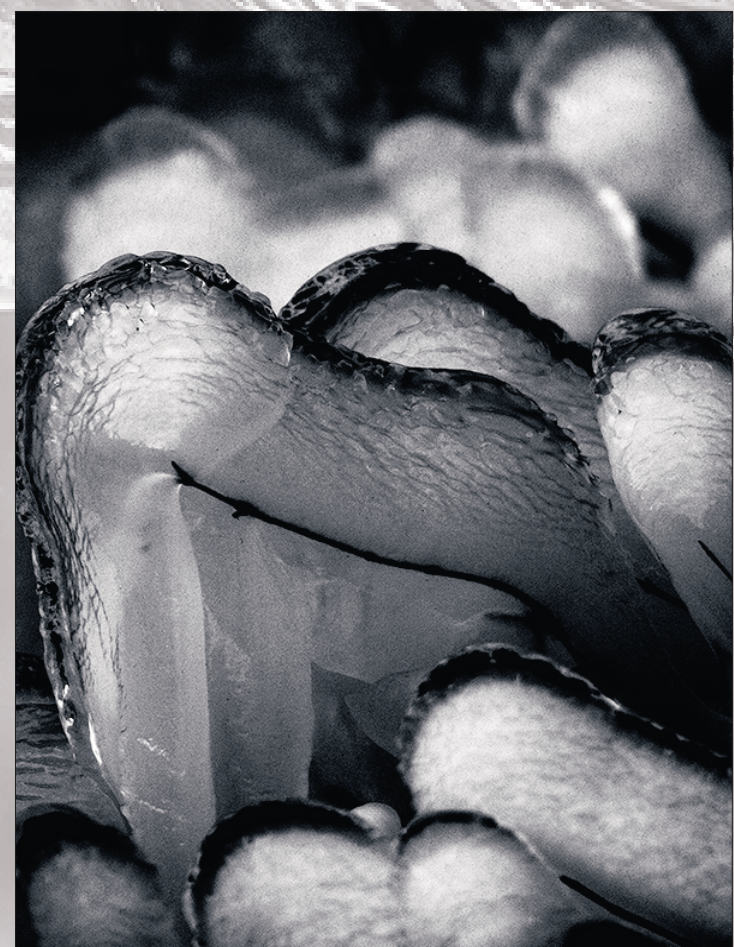
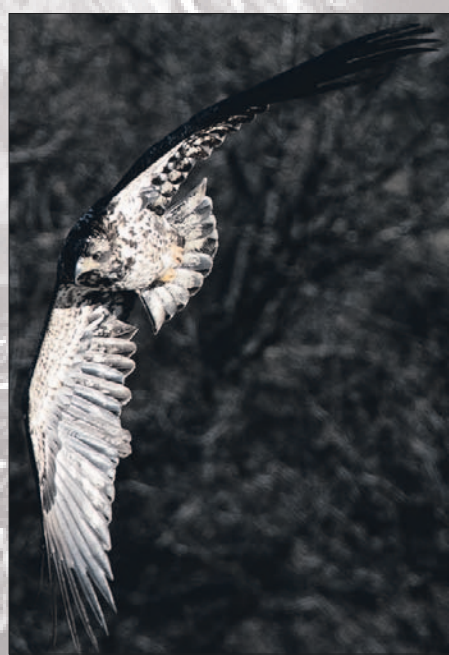
ing on the wind. I personally like shooting even elevation with the birds or down at them. And when they are flying, they will be backlit.

Otherwise, I like the sun shining on them and different angles of perspective, not them just sitting on the branches in the trees. There are times that they may sit for two to three hours without doing anything and I am there waiting ... waiting ... waiting ... waiting!

You need a very long lens. Even my 600/f4 with a 1.4 teleconverter is not long enough at times. I used manual focus most of the time.

When there is not enough sunlight and it is still cold, I concentrate on micro images of the frozen water. Noticing what is "deeper" within a "general scene" and play with the focus.

Stephen Datnoff is a professional photographer living in Hood River.



Photos and text by STEPHEN DATNOFF



M.D. VAN VALKENBURGH sits with a poster from Cuba, where he visited in 1997. He is glad to see relations changing for the better between America and Cuba, which is the same distance from the Florida coast as The Dalles is from Portland.

Calling on Cuba

M.D. Van Valkenburgh, who toured in 1997, praises move to normalize relations with long-isolated nation

By MARK GIBSON
The Dalles Chronicle

On a lark some years ago, The Dalles attorney M.D. Van Valkenburgh went to Cuba.

It was around 1997, and he'd just finished attending a tax conference in Miami, and some buddies were headed to Cuba in the comfort of a roomy 60-foot boat.

He joined them for the adventure, and found a country much like the photographs depict: A time warp where cars and amenities date from the 1950s.

Van Valkenburgh, who is board chair of the Columbia Gorge Community College district, agreed to an interview about his trip in light of President Barack Obama's surprise announcement Dec. 17 that the United States was normalizing diplomatic relations with Cuba, reversing a longstanding freeze that dates back to January 1961.

Van Valkenburgh said he was surprised "in a way" by the president's decision, which also includes a partial lifting of the trade and travel embargo to the communist

nation, but added, "I always felt it was inevitable. We couldn't be stupid forever."

"The rest of the world trades with them and we're 90 miles away and theoretically we can't trade with them. It's nonsense," he said.

Not only will a U.S. embassy reopen in Havana, but other changes will make certain categories of travel easier; allow more money to be sent to Cubans, provide telecommunication infrastructure and ease banking restrictions.

Please see CUBA, Page B3