AMS Headlines
Framing the Heavens: 2026 Photo Contest Winners
October 19, 2026

Grand Prize
Jaroslav Fous, “Diamond Dust Sky Eye”



“Diamond Dust Sky Eye” by Jaroslav Fous

Jaroslav says: “The photo Diamond Dust Sky Eye was taken after a sunny, frosty day with daylight halos. I was there for three hours, and made many photos of daylight halos. My friend wrote me to wait until the night for moon halos. It was about -7°C, with humidity about 97% and a gentle breeze. The moon was about 95% (two days before full moon). The photo was taken in the Ore Mountains near Boží Dar in Czechia (Czech Republic).”

Equipment: Nikon D500 plus fisheye lens; Samyang 8mm/f3.5, Rollei tripod.

Second Prize
Chris Elkinton, “Sea Dragon”



“Sea Dragon” by Chris Elkinton

Chris says: “Photographing big waves is one of my favorite ways to spend a day, so when the king tides occur during the winter months, I love to pack a thermos of tea and head to Cape Disappointment on the Washington coast. This area is known locally as an excellent spot to witness and photograph the raw power of the sea, especially when a high tide combines with large winter swell. For me, what makes this location special is the way the waves interact with each other in the bay. When the conditions are right, the incoming waves crash into the cliffs and reflect a portion of their energy back out to sea where it can collide with the next incoming wave. If you’re lucky, these collisions can be spectacular. ‘Sea Dragon’ depicts one of these collisions.”

“I shot a burst of images as the collision unfolded so I could catch just the right moment. Looking at the series of images, there was this one brief moment when the sea dragon appeared, and then it was gone.”

Technique: “To capture this image, I used a Canon 90D DSLR camera with a 70-300 mm lens. I set the exposure to 1/1600 seconds, f/9, and ISO 200 to freeze the motion of the waves.”

Third Prize
Roberto Bueno, “Cirrus, the Veils of the Moon”



“Cirrus, the Veils of the Moon” by Roberto Bueno

Roberto says: “I have liked cloud photography from the start. I think that clouds are among the most interesting atmospheric objects, both scientifically and photographically. So, I’m always looking into the skies for these bodies of water, hanging in the air, waiting quietly to attract the eyes of humans.

I used to observe the landscape and clouds from the balcony of my house, at the seaside of the Mediterranean Sea, in Spain. From here it is easy to see a lot of different kinds of clouds throughout the year.

That evening I was surprised because a crescent moon was in the path of a beautiful strip of cirrus clouds; they seemed like veils growing from the dark side of our satellite.

The sky was very clear with a deep blue color. But I’ve preferred to convert the photo into black and white, because volumes and textures grow dramatically in the brain of the observer when the colors don’t distract from the main photographic objects, in this case the veils of the moon.”

Equipment: Olympus OM-1 and Olympus 40-150 mm

Members’ Choice
Jeremy Janus, “Rainbow Cataclysm”



“Rainbow Cataclysm” by Jeremy Janus

Jeremy says: “I chased this cell east of Denver for a couple of hours when I saw this beautiful rainbow form in the wake of a storm. The clouds continued to morph as I would stop, shoot, and keep on rolling after this massive cell. At the climactic height of this rainbow, mammatus clouds appeared right above it and offered one of the most mesmerizing moments I have ever had the opportunity to see and capture during my storm chasing adventures. This was a relatively short chase at just around 5 hours, but I was able to shoot almost 500 shots during this epic chase.”

Equipment: Nikon Z6 camera, Nikkor Z 14-30mm f/4 lens. **Technical specs:** f/16, ISO 400, 1/200th of a sec.