



Twin City Camera Club

ViewFinder

Member: Photographic Society of America
and The Southwestern Michigan Council of Camera Clubs

July 2006 Roll 70, Exposure 7 Editor: John Opie Associate Editor: Dennis Mally

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Winners of TCCC's Annual Competition:

Monochrome: print of the year: Sharon Bogner -Skunk Cabbage

1st runner up Jim Lynch-First Snow, 2nd runner up Sharon Bogner-Wagner Falls

Color Prints: print of the year: Bruce Newnum -Hummingbird & Turks Cap

1st runner up Jim Lynch-Great Sand Dunes; 2nd runner up Jim Lynch-Seney Refuge

Slides: digital slide of the year: Tom McCall -Tides Out-Fogs In

1st runner up Tom McCall-Simplicitree; 2nd runner up Sharon Bogner-Don't Bug Me

slide of the year: Jim Lynch -Oregon Coast

1st runner up Sylvia Schlender-Pink Nose & Whiskers; 2nd runner up Jim Lynch-Sunrise

Images submitted: monochrome 164, color prints 250, digital 274, and about 280 slides.

Year-End Competition Data

According to the monthly stats for the 2005 - 2006 season; maintained and compiled by Sharon Bogner, we had 32 members competing in Class A, 7 members competing in Class B, submitting a total of 1563 images for both classes. Of that, 930 images received an acceptance and 145 received an honor, for a total of 1075. In the annual competition a total of 973 images were entered and judged resulting in the 12 for the Top Three's and 20 honorable mentions.

Tom McCall adds: As a side note, a little bit of trivia. Seven (7) out of twelve (12) of the images that made the top three and nine (9) out of twenty (20) of the honorable mentions, were not honors during the monthly competitions. So always remember judging is very subjective; what doesn't look so good to some judges, could be outstanding to others, so keep up the good work and enter those images.

New Website items: Tom McCall writes: On the TCCC website, we have added two (2) gallery albums in the 2005 - 2006 season: Honor Image Galleries. A gallery album for the annual competition print and slide of the year winners (Top Three) and a new gallery album of the honorable mention prints and slides that were considered in the final selections for the prints and slides of the year.

Annual picnic August 7th Monday (the first Monday in August) Woodbine

Lodge, Riverview Park. Dinner at 6:30. TCCC will furnish chicken and fish, plus lemonade. Bring your own table service (knife, fork, spoon and plate) and a dish to pass. Bingo with prizes after dinner. We need to know the numbers attending. Phone Ken McKeown at 429-0608, mail to 679 Clemens, St. Joseph MI 49085, or e-mail at mckeownkd@aol.com. If you have new items for bingo, notify Ken.

SWMCCC Activities Reminder

Summer Weekend of Photography — July 27, 28, 29, 30 — Hope College, Holland, MI

Once again a great four days of "summer school" are being planned this year, with many popular carryover events as well as new venues and opportunities to learn, practice and improve your photography. The Weekend is organized with a great deal of flexibility to accommodate the needs of everyone. You can come for one day or stay for all four days in accommodations that are provided on campus. If you've not attended one of these weekends before I'm sure you'll be impressed with both the offerings and the setting. Besides SWMCCC's *Counsellor* newsletter, check out <http://www.swmccc.org/> as this website has been recreated and contains up-to-date news on SWMCCC happenings.

Birds of Prey Photo Shoot will take place on Saturday Oct. 14, 2006 at the Outdoor Discovery Center in Holland, MI. Introduction will be at 5:00pm. The shoot will begin after the intro and continue until dark. Sunset will be at 7:04pm that night with twilight ending around 7:30pm. The total cost for the program is \$250 split among the photographers that participate. A sign-up sheet and maps will be available at the picnic and at the September meetings. For more information, check with Sharon Bogner, who we thank for organizing this event.

Select Subjects for 2006-7 Calendar (2nd Monday of each month)

Sept--Parts of a motor vehicle

Oct--Neon sign(s)

Nov--Rivers or streams

Dec--Entryways

Jan--Antiquity

Feb--Sweets or treats

Mar--People at work or play

Apr--White

May--Upton Arboretum (you must be inside the arboretum boundary while taking the photo)

June--Nature

When you are checking our website, says Tom McCall, there are some links worth checking out:

Absolute Michigan is a collection of links, features, news and information about the state of Michigan made better every day by real folks. View Images of the Great Lakes State, Michigan in Pictures <http://michpics.wordpress.com/> is a blog produced by the folks who made Absolute Michigan. It's designed to showcase the state of Michigan through visual means. <http://www.absolutemichigan.com/> They have featured TCCC as a link from their site and we have a link to them on the Photo Links page.

Taking Better Photos. By Holly@smalldog.com Too often when taking a picture people just point and shoot and think they'll make the photo better in a photo-editing program. Sure, you can change a lot of things in a program like Photoshop, but why not take advantage of the digital camera's LCD and create a great shot when you take it? Here are some pointers from a class I taught a few years back:

Learning to See

Decide how you can best capture the shot by choosing a suitable viewpoint and controlling what appears in the final picture. A photograph is merely a two-dimensional image of what we saw/see. Our eyes work in completely different ways; each eye offers a slightly different view. The two views together gives a strong impression of depth and spatial relationship.

Example: Focus on something in the room, close your left eye, and look at the object. Repeat with the right eye. Note the different perspective you get from each eye.

Successful composition is dependent on your ability to look at a scene and decide exactly what to point the camera at so the images recorded can capture the drama and grandeur of the broader view. The human eye is drawn to specific things. Here are the items that will capture the attention of your viewer, listed in order of importance:

Movement: Our eyes naturally go to even the slightest movement in a still frame. If there are several moving objects, our eyes jump among them. A good rule is to have just one new thing happening at a time to lead the viewer's eye around the frame.

Color Differences: One small patch of bright color against a dark background draws the eye into it. In general, warm colors attract the eye more than cool ones.

Weight of Objects in Frame: Objects with more size get more attention, but this can be manipulated. Big objects in the distance have less weight than smaller objects in the foreground that take up more screen space.

Creating Balance

Where you position the focal point in the frame is important because that will determine if the picture appears visually balanced. Use the rule of thirds: divide your camera's viewfinder using two imaginary horizontal and vertical lines so a grid is formed. The focal point may be positioned at one of the four intersection points created by the grid. The rule of thirds can be applied to any subject: portrait, still life, wildlife photography, architecture, and landscape.

A slight tilt of the camera will shift the balance. Move downward to emphasize the landscape and foreground; move upward to make a feature of an interesting sky. The horizon is generally best positioned either a third up from the base of the image or a third down from the top to give a more balanced image. Never try to force a picture to comply with the rule of thirds, but more often than not you will find that it can be applied in some way.

Leading the Eye

Look for and find lines. Lines can be used to divide, to add a strong graphic element, or even as the main focus of composition.

Horizontal lines echo the horizon and the force of gravity. Vertical lines are more active than horizontal. They produce dynamic compositions with a stronger sense of direction.

Tip: To maximize the effect, shoot in the upright format so the eye has further to travel from the bottom of the frame to the top.

Diagonal lines have great directional value and add depth by suggesting distance and perspective. They can also contrast strongly with the previous types of lines to create dynamic compositions that catch and hold the eye.

Converging lines are the most powerful. When included in a photo, they add a very strong sense of depth.

Example: Railroad tracks. If you stand in the middle and look down in the distance, the parallel lines appear to move closer together until they eventually seem to vanish.

Filling the Foreground

By exploiting the area of a scene closest to the camera (the foreground), you can create a strong composition. Anything can be used as foreground interest: roads, fences, rivers, streams, paths, rocks on the shore, a flower bed. Natural features tend to make the composition most interesting. Shadows can be used as foreground interest

Composing for Impact

Take a few steps closer. Get in the habit of asking yourself if moving closer to the subject would improve the composition. Photos of people will be more intimate. Action shots will be full of drama. Landscapes will lack empty space. Explore your subject from all angles - don't assume your photos have to be taken at eye level. Take photos at an elevated position. Bend down/stretch out on your stomach. Compose with color, which lends strong aesthetic power

Example: Bold, contrasting colors such as blue and yellow, or red and green, will produce a photo that's exciting to look at.

Use your camera on its side. By using the camera in a vertical position, you can include much more foreground or sky. This makes the eye travel further from the top to bottom, leading to an active composition.

Web Site Resources

BetterPhoto.com features online photography courses, digital camera ratings and reviews, great tips for improving photographic technique, camera comparisons, photo contests, Q&A, free email newsletters, and expert help with all aspects of beginning photography.

<http://www.betterphoto.com>

Shortcourses.com is a complete guide to digital cameras, digital photography, and digital video.

<http://www.shortcourses.com>

Travel and learn with world-renowned digital photographers Vincent Versace and Moose Peterson and photograph the great landscapes of North America.

<http://www.digitallandscape.org>

Making your digital camera see more » By Dave Huss

The following tutorial is courtesy of "Mac Design Magazine" Copyright 2006

One of the challenges of photography is to capture the image that you see with your camera. With modern cameras performing all of the light measurement and changing the settings, in most cases when you press the shutter button, the image that you capture is an accurate representation of what you saw; that is, until you attempt to photograph a scene that has extremes in lighting. When you're out shooting a sunset, for example, you can see both the foreground and the sunset quite clearly, but after taking the photograph, the sunset looks brilliant and the foreground is black as pitch.

What has happened? Your eyes have a much greater dynamic range (ability to see both the darkest and the lightest shades) than the best digital or film camera made. Your eyes can see both the shaded subjects in the foreground and the blazing sunset in the background all at the same time—your camera can't. Which part of the image is properly exposed, and therefore seen in the resulting photograph, is determined by which part of the scene was used to take your light measurements. A pro would describe it as either exposed to the highlights (in this case, the sunset) or exposed to the shadows (foreground). Whichever light source you choose, the area not selected will, in most instances, be lost.

Taking the photos This is best done using a steady tripod, but I have done it handheld. If you don't want to lug around a tripod or if your tripod is a little on the flimsy side, buy a pound bag of lentils or navy beans at the grocery store and you have an instant beanbag that you can put on a fence post or the hood of your car to get a really stable shot. Here's how to make the two photos:

Step One: After the camera is mounted on the tripod (or on your beanbag), compose the shot through either the viewfinder or the LCD screen.

Step Two: Change the metering to center-weighted or the equivalent with your camera. Point the camera so that the brightest part of the image is dead center on the image and then press the shutter down halfway. This locks the meter reading (called Exposure Lock, or EL) to the brightest part of the photo.

Step Three: Still holding down the shutter button, return the camera to its original position where you composed the Shot in Step 1.

Step Four: Now comes the magic. Press the shutter down the rest of the way, taking the photo. The bright areas of image in your LCD screen should be well exposed and the shadow areas almost pure black. Without moving the camera, press the shutter a second time. Now the camera is correctly reading the scene and the resulting photo will have the shadows areas properly exposed but the brighter areas will be blown out.

There are several variations on Step 4. Since I shoot with a Nikon D-100, I can change the metering system very quickly using a switch on the camera body. I will often use spot metering on a bright area, and after I take the first photo, I switch to Average, which accomplishes the same thing. If you're shooting at or near sunrise, sunset, or moonrise, keep the time between exposures to a minimum. The sun and the moon move very fast as they near the event horizon. This procedure takes some practice but since you have a digital camera, take lots of photos—they don't cost anything.

Bringing it all together Combining the two photos in Photoshop is the fun part. Here's how it's done:

Step One: Open both images. Select (Command-A; PC: Control-A) the darker image (exposed to highlights) and drag it on top of the lighter (exposed to shadows) image with the Move tool (V) while holding the Shift key. This will center the darker image on its own layer above the lighter image.

Step Two: Create a layer mask (Layer>Add Layer Mask>Reveal All). Select the Brush tool (B), set your Foreground color to black, and paint the areas of the darker image in which you want the lighter background image to appear. This is a situation where a Wacom tablet is really a godsend. Change the pressure settings so it controls the opacity and slowly reveal the brighter foreground subject. (If you don't have a Wacom tablet, you can change the Opacity of the Brush tool in the Options Bar.) If you go too far, press the X key to change the Foreground to white and paint over the area again to bring back the darker image.