

FOCUS

Newsletter of the Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club
Hosted by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Visit our website at www.naturecameraclub.com



Highlights

August 1

Tutorial
Preparation for
In-House Picnic

August 15

In-House Picnic
and
Members Pictures

September 5

Labor Day
No Meeting

September 19

Competition

CELEBRATE SUMMER AT OUR PHOTO PICNIC AUGUST 15



What's a photo picnic, you ask? Well, it's a chance for members and guests to enjoy some summer snacks and summer photos. We'll be indoors at Mayslake so we don't have to worry about getting rained out.

But, in order for picnic to happen, we need two things - photos and food.

The Photos



Here's your assignment.....go out and enjoy the summer with your camera in hand - or on the tripod! The theme is **SPECIAL EFFECTS**. You define what "special effects" means. It could be black and white, panorama, photo impressionism, multiple exposures, or just the special effects in nature itself. You decide. Let your creativity flow. Your subject should be **NATURE**, but the hand of man rule does not apply. We need lots of images for a good show so don't just limit yourself to one or two. You can submit up to 10 images.

Here are the details on how to submit your images. Jpeg images only. Sizing rules are flexible but you can use the competition guidelines. If your email server has problems sending 10 pictures at one time, just send them in two emails. The file name should have your name, and either a unique name such as a title (Lightning on the Prairie) or a sequential number (gajdas1.jpg) for the image. Send your images to Gail Chastain at gachastain@hotmail.com. Try to get them in by August 8. Gail has also indicated that in the body of your email you can include a brief description of the “special effect” for each image which she can include in the slideshow.

Gail will confirm by email receipt of the pictures!! If you don't get an email receipt, call her at 630-221-0740.

This is not a competition and there are no prizes, except some door prizes, including a special door prize only available to members who submitted images. This is just for FUN!! It's a chance for members to enjoy an evening with fellow photographers seeing what everyone did “on their summer vacations.” It's open to all members and guests and is a special opportunity for those of you who don't participate in competitions to share your photos with other members of the Club.

Also, if you're not able to come on the meeting date, please consider sending in some images anyway. We'll try to repeat parts of the slideshow before upcoming meetings whenever possible.



The Food



The Club will provide some soft drinks and lemonade. We're asking members to just bring a snack (nothing fancy) to share.

So get busy and start shooting to get ready for August 15. You'll also have a chance to pick up a few last minute pointers at the August 1 meeting, where we planning some mini-workshops.



COMPETITION

Sheila Newenham

Thanks to all those who participated in our Non-Competitive Critique. We had a nice variety of images and good discussion about composition (crop!) and impact. We appreciate the expertise of and feedback from our volunteer judges; Ruth Smith, Ray Kammer and Tom Richardson. We are all better prepared to enter the competition season! The competition dates for the upcoming season are September 19, 2011, November 21, 2011, January 16, 2012 and March 19, 2012.

The document formerly known as the “Commentary Card” is now called the “Image Identification Card”. Every image, print and digital, submitted for competition must have an image identification card with it. This is a document that you can print from the website and bring with you on the night of the competition.

Due to the increasing number of submissions (which is fantastic!), we need to set limits on the number of images that can be critiqued at each competition. On your Entry Summary card (available on the website) please list your images in the order of critique preference. If image volume is high, you may only get one or two images critiqued and I would like you to be able to choose which ones those are. So your first image listed should be the one you most want feedback about. The second one listed would be the next one you would like to have critiqued, etc. Some nights, all of the images may get judge critiques, other nights there will not be time.

In another effort to accommodate larger numbers of images, make-ups will now be ineligible for honors. They will be scored and count toward your total competition score. They will only be critiqued as time allows. To get the full benefit of competing, I encourage all of you to submit your images throughout the season and not wait until last competition or two to get your images entered.

There is valuable information on our website (www.naturecameraclub.com) on the Club Information page that may help you (Club Information). Competition Rules & Entry Guidelines explains the nature rules, which images are eligible, what paperwork you'll need and more. Instructions for Preparing Digital Files explain how to resize images and add borders for best presentation. CACCA (Chicago Area Camera Club Assn) Judging Guidelines will help you to understand what the judges are looking for in a high scoring image.

As always, if you have any questions about rules, deadlines, eligibility requirements, submission protocols or anything else, I am happy to speak with you at meetings.



Conservation Report

Dan Hollister

A BURNING QUESTION

Forest fires leave nothing but a cold, charred, lifeless expanse in their wake. Or do they? I just returned from a trip to Arizona and New Mexico where they are experiencing extreme drought conditions resulting in some of the most extensive forest fires in history. Higher temperatures, low humidity and strong winds are making the situation particularly difficult. Many parks, recreational areas and roads were closed because of dense smoke and the extreme fire risk.

During the early part of the 20th century wildfire destroyed many communities and killed hundreds of people in the West and Midwest. The public agreed that fire was an enemy that must be fought and suppressed at all cost. Fire fighting became a courageous struggle against nature and we became adept at putting out fires, but we did not understand that fire, like rain is a necessary integral part of the forest ecosystem. A study done in 2005 by the University of Arizona estimated that in the late 1800's forests of the West contained about 50 trees for every 2.5 acres. After a century without fire, up to 1700 trees now crowd the same area. By quickly stamping out all fires and allowing fuel to buildup we ensure that when conditions are right fire will return, bigger, hotter and more destructive than ever. Most climate models now strongly suggest that the recent drought is not just a temporary phenomenon but part of a long term drying trend made worse by global warming.



The national forest fire policy has evolved from one of suppressing fire to one of managing fire. Some of the benefits of fire can be summarized as follows:

1. The cones of lodgepole pine won't open until they are subjected to high temperatures
2. Fire turns dead plant material into soil nutrients
3. Fewer trees, brush and mature plants means that more sunlight reaches seedlings
4. Fire helps in controlling forest disease
5. Habitat mosaics created by fire support a greater diversity of plants and animals

Returning fire to ecosystems is our only hope of reducing the long-term risk of catastrophic forest fires. Our fire management policies must give priority to human safety and protection of personal property while allowing to the greatest extent possible, natural fire cycles to occur. The policy should also encourage strategic thinning and prescribed burning to create "community protective zones." Unfortunately in the 1990's eight million new homes were built in fire prone areas. Annual federal spending on fighting forest fires now tops four billion dollars attempting to defend property in these areas. Technically these areas are known as the wildland-urban interface. Firefighters call it the stupid zone.

Houses need not serve as tinder they can be built with fire-resistant roofing and siding. Some communities now require fire-resistant construction, but most do not. Every time a house is built in an evergreen forest, a wager is placed. "It won't happen to us." In fire's terms it is the equivalent of building below sea level in New Orleans. The waters, the flames, will return. They always do.

McKee Marsh Outing **Gail Chastain**

A total of 12 Mayslake members headed out to McKee Marsh over two days, Friday and Saturday, May 27 & 28. As our weather can be, both days presented the photographers with different challenges and opportunities. Whether it was sun or no sun, wind or no wind, both days were thankfully dry. No rain!!

McKee is a restored marsh, surrounded by woods, prairie, and grasslands. The area provided the participants with great photographic opportunities, and for many it was a new location to enjoy and explore. Be sure to visit the Mayslake Web Page to see more great pictures from McKee Marsh!!



©Sue Gajda



©Barn Swallow
Kristen Lauman

Goose Lake Outing
Gail Chastain
July 9, 2011

A group of 14 Mayslakers braved the hot weather, and headed down to Goose Lake State Park near Morris IL, for a wonderful morning of wandering the prairie. Duane Heaton was the host of this outing, and had done a great job of scoping out the area to direct us to the best picture taking spots. We left no footprints, took only pictures, and although we left a lot of sweat, we had a great time!! We opted for an early lunch and then (most) headed over to the Short Cemetery, one of the county's historic cemeteries.

Thanks Duane for a great outing.

To see images from this outing, and other Mayslake outings, go to the Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club website.



Dragon Fly
©Gail Chastain



©Sue Gajda



Dawn Light Beneath Tree
©Duane Hickman

DODGE AND BURN TECHNIQUE

Ruth Smith

- Open your image in Photoshop on which you want to work.
- Go to Layer > New
- When the drop down menu opens,
- Click None, select gray
- In Mode, select soft light or overlay (I prefer soft light)
- Set Opacity to 50% (for a starting point)
- Click OK
- Be sure your Foreground colors are set to black and white.
- If you want to lighten an area, set white as the foreground color (*Dodge*)
- If you want to darken an area, set black as the foreground color (*Burn*)
- Choose "B" (brush) on the keyboard and set the size of your brush with parentheses to suit the area you will be working on.
- With the mouse go over the area on which you wish to lighten (Dodge) or darken (Burn)

If you find that the 50% opacity is too much or not enough, use the opacity slider in the layers palette to adjust the amount that looks right to you.

Why use this method????

**YOU DO NOT LOSE ANY
DETAIL IN THE IMAGE!**

If you do not like what you did you can simply throw the layer away and start over!

Good luck!

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