

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

December 6

Competition

December 20

Holiday Party

January 3

No Meeting

January 17

Lightroom

Fred Drury

It's Almost Holiday Time!

The annual holiday social is scheduled for our December 20 meeting. It's a chance for members to get together during the holidays and enjoy an evening together. Spouses and guests are welcome to attend. We're asking members to bring a snack/appetizer/dessert to share. The Club will provide beverages.

Traditionally, at this meeting, we ask members to share a short presentation on one of their favorite places to photograph. The presentation can be around 10 to 15 minutes and can be done in any presentation format that can shown on a laptop connected to a projector. If your interested in doing a presentation at the meeting, please contact Sue Gajda at segnet@aol.com.

Welcome New Members!

Bill Dixon

Chuck Peterson - St. Charles

David Schooley - Elmhurst

Laura Crockatt - Wheaton

Noriko Buckles - Downers Grove

We are happy to have you with us and look forward to sharing our passion for Nature Photography together.

COMPETITION

December 6, 2010

February 7, 2011

April 4, 2011

It's Christmas Party Time

Dan Hollister
Social Chairman

At our regular meeting on December 20, we will gather around the punch bowl and share refreshments with our fellow photographers, their wives and friends. The evening will include a number of short programs presented by members covering a variety of subjects. It is requested that each member bring an appetizer (finger food). The punch, coffee and Christmas decorations will be provided by the Club. Come and see some of the photographic work being done by other members, and help make this a special holiday occasion.

OUTINGS

Jon Snyder

There will be no club outing in December. Outings will resume in January.

Competition

Sheila Newenham
Competition Chair lady

The second 2010-2011 PSA (Photographic Society of America) Electronic Image Interclub Competition and Nature Division Competition are in January. Our club will continue to participate. I will select six images from our December 6th competition for submission for each of these PSA competitions (a total of 12 images in all). I will contact the makers for permission ahead of time.

Our second competition of the year is fast approaching. If you didn't participate in the October competition, now is the time to jump in. Bring your prints (mounted on 11x 14 black boards)! E-mail your digital images (competition@mlnpc.com) sized no taller than 768 pixels and no wider than 1024 pixels) by 7pm Sunday 12/5. The earlier the images are submitted, the more

time there is for corrections to be made if need be. Make sure the title of your image is the same on the image or image file, on the commentary card and on the summary sheet. Consider adding a white border to your images to improve their display on the screen and light box. Details about how to submit entries and necessary paperwork can be found on our website http://www.mlnpc.com/Mayslake/Club_Information.html Bring print images, all entry forms and commentary cards with you to the meeting and plan to arrive no later than 6:45pm. I am available to answer any questions and help with your enjoyment of and participation in our club competitions in any way I can.

EXHIBITS

Janice Henry

Since we are in between shows and there aren't any updates about that, for the next couple of issues of Focus I am going to cover a few helpful hints about preparing work for exhibits. These were arrived at from the experiences I have had either assisting with hanging of shows or submitting work to shows.

Most of the shows I have been involved with lately have requested in the preparation of work that is hung that the wires attached to the back of the pieces have the ends covered with tape. This not only protects the walls of the gallery where the work will be hung it also keeps the ends of the wires which can be sharp from injuring the artist or the people from the gallery hanging the piece.

The material used can be as simple as masking tape or even the blue tape that is used for protecting woodwork when you paint your house. One good thing about the blue tape is that if you re-use the frame for other pieces and you need to change the length of the wire, it can be easily removed. There is no real trick to it, just wrap the tape so it covers the area where the ends of the wire are.

It is an easy thing to do to make your framed photographs more finished.

Just For Beginners!

Carole Kropscot, APSA Leawood, Kansas

The forty-sixth in a series of short instructional articles for beginning photographers, the following is intended to help those who want to go beyond snapshots.

Basic Icon Shooting Modes

Cameras use a variety of shooting modes to set the exposure. The photographer must choose one of them. The camera automatically sets the appropriate combination of f/stop (aperture) and shutter speed for a good exposure.

Shooting modes are indicated by icons (small graphics) or letters on a dial, either on top or on the back of the camera. This mode dial differs on different cameras. Sometimes there are also menus associated with the dial. The modes are explained in the instruction book for each brand and model of camera.

These basic icon shooting modes base their settings on the scene. Commonly found icons are for portraits, landscapes, action (moving subjects), people in dark scenes, and close-ups. Sometimes, but not always, the camera manual will state what actual aperture and shutter speeds are used.

Icon shooting modes are used for convenience by both beginning and experienced photographers. For beginners without extensive knowledge about exposure, these icons are very helpful.

The icon of a lady's head is for taking portraits of people and animals. The camera sets a wide aperture for a sharply focused subject and a slightly blurred background.

The icon of a mountain is for landscapes. The aperture is somewhat closed down to create a higher depth of field, resulting in a sharp foreground and background.

The icon of a runner is for taking action shots of any moving subject so that the moving subject will be as sharp as possible. Although popular for sports, this mode works well for active children and pets. The camera sets a high shutter speed and a coordinating aperture depending on the available light.

The icon of a person with a star is for flash pictures of people at night, dusk, dawn, or in other low light. The shutter speed is reduced so that the background has time to be recorded instead of being dark, as it is with a regular flash exposure.

The icon of a flower is for close-ups of any subject. This mode allows the camera to be placed much closer to the subject. In all other modes, the closest focusing distance is much farther away. The shutter speed is chosen to coordinate with a wide open aperture (an f/stop with a small number).

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Lazy BIRDING

Elena McTighe, APSA
Sea Girt, New Jersey

Not everyone can or wants to travel to an exotic location to shoot subjects. Sometimes the best subjects can easily be found in one's own yard: birds for instance. Birds are found everywhere and with a little effort and forethought a very nice bird *studio* can be set up in the yard.

First, find or create a place in the yard with a nice background for shooting birds. Evergreens provide an excellent, thick green setting that contrasts very

nicely with all species of birds. Possible choices of bird-attracting evergreens are hemlocks, hollies, junipers, pines, Balsam or Douglas firs, Blue or Norway spruces and Japanese yews. Nest, lure the birds to the designated area with bird feeders and do talk with a good bird feeder supply expert because different types of feed will attract different species of birds. And now, for really lazy birding: it is possible to shoot through clear, clean glass from the comfort of your home. Gray overcast days minimize reflections.

Place the camera on a tripod and use at least an 80-400 mm zoom lens, then while warm and cozy in the house, photograph the birds. This photographer uses a Bogen 501 Pro Video Head® with Quick Release on top of the tripod. It is actually meant for video camera and has a swift moving swivel head that enables one to rapidly follow a bird's movement as it hops from branch to branch. Set up your tripod so that you are shooting the subject from eye level. Take into consideration the amount of available light and set your ISO accordingly: between 200-800 ISO will usually do the trick. Several of the newer DSLR's can use ISO's up to 3200 without producing any noticeable noise. Some birds, such as chickadees, will quickly become accustomed to the camera's presence because certain birds, like male cardinals, are very skittish and will fly off at the slightest hint of movement.

Be prepared to shoot many, many images in RAW mode utilizing the continuous shutter feature on the camera. Birds rarely pose and even when the bird is still, the tree limb or perch is usually in constant motion. Sometimes, shooting on an overcast day will not provide the light necessary for a quick shutter speed, so a great deal of patience, perseverance and lots of shooting is required. Take advantage of bad weather: rain, snow and fog can be a photographer's best friend. A little dismal weather can make the difference between an ordinary or extraordinary image. So while sipping hot cocoa, shoot away! The reward of a sharp, nicely composed picture of a brightly colored bird is worth the effort. Not only will you have fun shooting, but also the birds are enjoyable to watch and study.

After shooting, a minimum amount of work is necessary in the digital darkroom. Cropping and sharpening are usually all that are needed. If you do not plan to use your *little yard bird* in a nature exhibition, then some cloning may also be done.

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Immediate Past President: Tom Richardson
Vice-President, Nature: Pat McPherren
VP, Photography: Lou Petkus
Treasurer: Gary Saunders
Secretary: Fran Piepenbrink

2010-2011 Chairpersons

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Competition Assistant: Marie Ward
Competition Assistant: Rose Janulis
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