



Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com

January 2009 Newsletter

Calendar of Events

February

Meeting: Feb. 3, 7pm

Program: Swap meet

Featured Member: Bill Lipscomb

Contest: Sunsets (12 month)

Outing: MO Botanical Garden, date TBD

Planning Meeting: Feb. 17

March

Meeting: Mar. 3

Program: Dan Overstreet

Featured Member: Linda Bundren

Contest: Winter (60 day)

Outing: Tom Ulrich lecture, Mar. 16, 7pm, SIU Lawson Hall 161

Planning Meeting: Mar. 17

April

Meeting: Apr. 7

Program: Steve Schlager, Aerial photography

Featured Member: Jillian Choate

Contest: Funny/humorous (12 month)

Outing: TBA

Planning Meeting: Apr. 21

Q & A

Got a photography question that you'd like answered? Send it in; we'll try to find the answer and print it here. Please let us know if you'd like the question attributed or anonymous.

January Meeting

We started the new year off strong, with a well-attended meeting on Jan. 6. We had four new members (Elaine Parker, Tom Rabideau, Judy Stewart, and Mary Jane Estrada) and one visitor (Al Parr) brought by Linda and Jan.

Our program was a presentation by Joe McFarland, staff writer and photographer for Outdoor Illinois Magazine, a publication of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. He gave a talk on what Outdoor Illinois needs most: stock photos that help tell a story. Rare or unusual photos are more useful for their annual photo contest. They pay \$15 per image; send to dnr.editor@illinois.gov. Cover shots (should you be fortunate enough to have one selected for this) do pay \$150. Take care that the photo works well as a full front-to-back cover, with room for the title material on the front.

They also are looking for stories: how-to articles, rare/unusual topics, stories for novice & pros, human interest, seasonal stories, and photo essays. Note that they work about 1 year in advance! You should send in a proposal of about 50 words or less; the finished stories should be about 1500 words or less. They pay \$300 for a full story (may be less for a shorter one).

Finally, there is the February Photo Contest, an annual all-photo issue. Pictures must be taken in Illinois. Categories are Recreation, Wildlife, Fish, Plants, Fungi, Nature Preserves, and Youth. Rules are on-line; pictures must be submitted by 1st of August. Joe hopes and expects that the rules about IDNR keeping the rights to photos is going to change this year.

Our monthly contest was Outdoor Christmas Lights. The winners were:

1st place: Virginia Stith

2nd place: Jonathan Springer

3rd place: Linda Martin

Our features member this month was Dave Hammond, who entitled his presentation "Photos Through the Year of 2008." He had some great pictures of geese

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Member News

Dana Tetzlaff got a picture (her one of a boat in a lake) published in Life Images magazine (a journaling magazine). Congratulations, Dana!

Joanna Grey will be writing editorials about restaurants along with interior shots starting Jan. 15 in the Southern Illinoisan newspaper.

Rene de Groof will try to re-schedule Eagle tour at CONWR for the 1st weekend of Feb., then contact SIPS with the exact date(s). [Please see the email that subsequently went out to the SIPS list for details.] Also, Rene will be teaching a new class in photography starting Jan. 26 at Rend Lake College.

Dave Brewer had several notes:

- Swans are feeding at Burning Star 5, a half mile north on Rte 149.
- There are 40-50 eagles at Riverton in the Two Rivers area, as well as 365 trumpeter swans and pelicans.
- Dave will have a Avian Imaging seminar at Shawnee Community College, in Ullin IL.
- Birding Fest is now Nature Fest; there is no photo contest this year.

George Stone relayed that Eagles are abundant between Clarksville and Louisiana, MO, along the Mississippi River 5 mi. N of St. Louis.

Mike Hicks brought in a twin lens reflex for people to look at. He also brought in a Digital Photo book.

Photo Op

by Jim Osborn

In this article I decided to focus on the challenges of taking photographs outdoors in the cold of winter. There are special things to think about during the winter. Consider the weather. I would propose that "sunny" days are optimal for photographing ducks and geese in flight. Grey skies make for grey pictures and grey pictures are less appealing. While we have



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Club members outside the Fin Inn during the Alton outing.

Alton Outing

This month our outing was to the Alton, IL area to photograph the eagles that nest along the river. We had quite a turnout, including Linda Bundren, Linda Martin, Jan Sundberg, Jillian, Dave H., Dave B., Dana T., Bill Terry, Jonathan, Leon, Virginia, Mike H., and Jim O. (In fact there was at least one other there whose name we didn't catch -- apologies!) It was very cold, but the morning turned out to be nice and clear. We saw a number of eagles, especially down by the locks and at a pull-off on Route 3 between Alton and Grafton. A large group of us got together and had lunch at the Fin Inn as well, which was very enjoyable.

Programs and Outings

At the January meeting, we solicited ideas for programs people would like to see and outings they would like to participate in. Here is a summary of what we got for program ideas:

- Post processing techniques: RAW, Photoshop
- Marketing photos
- Night and low-light photography
- How-to: Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, etc.
- Lighting
- How to organize photos on computer; work flow for organization of images

- Overview of web sites of interest to members
- Developing a web page for photographers (including images & developing the page)
- Night photography
- Photographing people

And here are the outing ideas we got:

- Two Rivers
- Heron State Park
- Trails
- Eagles
- Ft. Massac encampment
- Old Stone Face
- Camp Ondesok
- Horse Farm
- Tour of Portrait studio & Lessons on Lighting
- Trips to local waterfall locations
- Heron Pond
- SIU Campus
- Studio
- Botanical Gardens in St. Louis
- Wildlife
- Shooting in the Rain
- Indoor outing during winter
- In Summer: places without snakes
- Shawnee National Forest
- Garden of the Gods; Rim Rock Trail
- Horseshoe Lake
- Cave-In-Rock
- Sunday Outings in Spring / Fall

This is a good list that should keep us busy for a while, but more and different ideas are always welcome.

Member Interests

In the member information form we passed out in January, there was also a space to write in your photographic interests. We had quite a response, with many diverse areas listed. Here is the breakdown:

- Nature (20)
- Wildlife (14)
- People (Kids, Grandkids, etc.) (11)
- Landscape (10)
- Flowers (7)
- Macro (6)
- Birds (4)
- Architecture (4)
- Portraits (4)
- Fungus (mushrooms) (2)
- One of each of the following: Geology & Mountains, Auto Racing, Studio, General Art, Wedding, Antiques, Astronomy, Documentary, Sunsets, Pets, Concerts, Trees, Still Life, Sports, City Scapes

January Meeting

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at Union county, Richard and Susan Day's, fall colors, and a project he's doing on old grain elevators, barns, and silos for a Highland Museum curator. He also mentioned he had a 16x20 print of his "sunflower" picture place in the top 100 out of 25,000 entries in the Nature's Best photo contest.

Shortly after his presentation, Dave was honored with a well-deserved plaque for his work as SIPS president in 2008.

Our contest for February is Sunsets; this is a one year contest. The topic for our March contest (a 60-day one) was announced at the meeting: "Winter."

Planning Meeting

The monthly planning meeting was held Jan. 20. Chief among the topics was filling out the 2009 schedule for contests and outings, and good progress was made. Look for these updates on the online calendar; they will also of course be announced at meetings.

Photo Op

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all learned that overcast skies saturate colors in landscape and fall foliage shots, winter is not usually considered a season of color so I would focus on brighter days, given the opportunity. If you are shooting waterfowl on the ground, then perhaps a blue sky is less important—you are the judge.

Be aware that extreme cold temperatures can affect your lens. A mistake I repeatedly make in cold weather is blowing on the lens filter to remove a bit of dust. The condensation from my breath will cloud the filter for a couple minutes.

Extreme temperatures can also affect battery life. If you happen to leave your equipment in your car overnight or even leave it in a cold car all day, the batteries will tend to drain. While some batteries rebound as they warm up, you may find that when you turn on the camera for your first shot of the day the charge indicator will show low battery power.

My other big bugaboo in photographing outdoors in the winter is cold hands. You need dexterity—right? For me regular gloves or mittens don't provide the dexterity or flexibility to manipulate the buttons and dials on a normal DSLR camera. Leaving your hands bare can lead to frigid if not frost-bitten digits (and I really hate trying to carry and manipulate a cold metal tripod with bare hands). Let me suggest some items to consider. First, and probably the cheapest, are mittens where the top folds back to expose your fingers from the knuckle to the tip. While these mittens provide improved dexterity, they are not optimal and your fingertips will still get frozen when exposed. Second, sporting goods stores may carry very thin hunting gloves that provide much better dexterity and are surprising warm for the thinness of the material. Mine are camo—all the better for bird photography. Third, there is a new item out called a cozy photo bag. The bag fits over your DSLR and has extensions on the sides to keep your hands warm during shooting. This product is quite expensive (about \$140). If you want, check it out at

www.cozybagphoto.com.

The bottom line is, DON'T AVOID

SHOOTING IN THE WINTER. Be prepared, get out there, and get those great shots that you can only get in winter!!

From the Secretary

by Jonathan Springer

Most of us are still thawing out from the snowstorm last week, but what's bad for the roads and power lines (and even newsletters) can make for some scenic winter photography. Jim offers some winter advice in his column, and since I don't think we're done with the cold weather, it should come in handy. Speaking of columns, it has been suggested that we offer a Q&A section in this newsletter. Got a nagging question, but don't feel like standing up in the middle of a meeting and asking? Send it in, and we'll see what we can come up with.

Although we do try to get out as much as possible, in a month like this inevitably we stay indoors a bit more. I thought it might be useful to talk a bit about that great indoor activity, surfing photography web sites. We all probably have our favorites, and I don't pretend to know all the best sites, but here are a few that I like:

<http://photo.net/> is a "community of photographers," and one of the oldest around. It was started by Philip Greenspun, an MIT Ph.D. and entrepreneur who is best known (when he is known at all) for founding ArsDigita, a company that developed software for creating web sites like photo.net. The site offers galleries, reviews, and tutorials, but especially a strong user community in the forums.

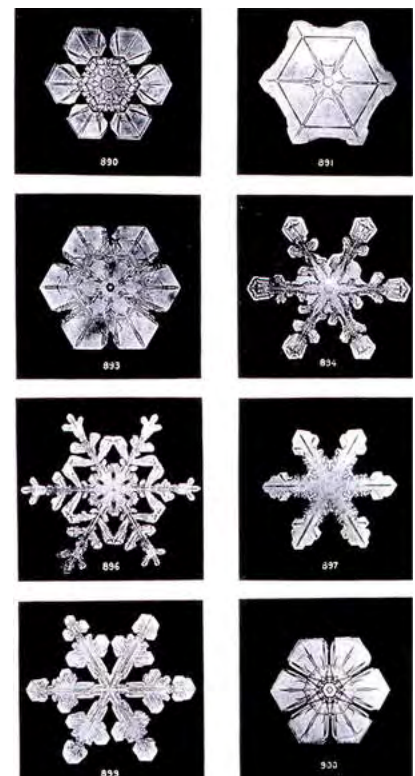
<http://dpreview.com/> is perhaps the canonical camera review site. If you want in-depth technical information (and I do), this site fits the bill, covering a very wide range of cameras and going into almost excruciating detail in its reviews. Founder Phil Askey set a very high standard in web site design too, with a clean look that makes it a joy to read. Dpreview was recently sold to Amazon, but shows no sign of weakening its content.

Dpreview doesn't attempt to cover lenses (beyond press releases), so I have to turn to other sites, such as

<http://www.the-digital-picture.com/> and <http://www.wlcastleman.com/equip/reviews/>. (Note the two I've listed only cover Canon mount lenses. That's just what I use; I'm sure someone who uses Nikon, or Four Thirds, etc. could jump in with their own list---feel free!) I don't tend to go to one site for lens reviews though; I'm more likely to use a search engine. You can also find opinions in the comments section on Amazon, but the big problem there is that there is no way to calibrate any one person's comment. The author could simply be very picky, or too forgiving.

For online photo galleries, there is an almost limitless number. I won't even attempt to list them all, but I will note that a number of members here use <http://pbase.com/> or <http://flickr.com/>. Likewise for online printing: there are too many to list, and I don't have a strong opinion on which may be best.

That's all for this month. As always, Lu and I welcome your feedback.



Snowflake photos by Wilson Bentley, circa 1902