



Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com

February 2009 Newsletter

Calendar of Events

March

Meeting: Mar. 3

Program: Karen Genter

Featured Member: Linda Bundren

Contest: Winter (60 day)

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

Planning Meeting: Mar. 17

April

Meeting: Apr. 7

Program: Steve Schlaeger

Featured Member: Jillian Choate

Contest: Funny/Humorous (12 month)

Outing: LaRue Pine Hills, Apr. 4

Planning Meeting: Apr. 21

May

Meeting: May 5

Program: TBA

Featured Member: Dana Tetzlaff

Contest: Eggs (60 day)

Outing: TBA

Planning Meeting: May 19

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MOBOT outing report

... plus member news, upcoming events, and more!

February Meeting

A large number of people braved the cold to attend our February meeting in Marion. We continued to add some new members: Ruth Hilton, of Pittsburgh; Donald McDonald of Murphysboro; Metro Armstrong from Carterville; Russ from Carterville (Russ454 on Flickr - check it out, he has some impressive landscapes); James Whitt from Marion; Mike and Judy Bishop, Carterville; and Ben Wasson, SIUC.

Our program was a swap meet; people brought in equipment for sale, trade, or in Mike Hicks' case, to give away for free. Equipment included a Nikon FE film camera and an Olympus UZ (Jan Sundberg), a Mamiya 6 (Chuck Clemens), a waterproof Canon film P&S (Dave Hammond), and an EF-S 17-85mm Canon lens (Dave Horning).

Bill Lipscomb was our featured member this month, and gave a presentation on his trip last summer to the southwest, including Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas. His description of shooting in Antelope Canyon was especially fascinating, and of course there were plenty of great pictures to look at.

The February meeting contest topic was sunsets, and there were quite a lot of entries (all terrific, I thought). The contest winners were

1st place: Lynn Love

2nd place: Virginia Stith

3rd place: Jonathan Springer

(By the way, Lynn was also at the Alton outing in January, though left off the list in the last newsletter.) Other participants were Joanna Gray, Jim Osborn, Dave Morgan, Lori Mascal, Linda Martin, Jan Sundberg, Mike Hicks, Dana Tetzlaff, and Carol Sluzewich.

Coming up, our contest topic for March is "Winter," a 60 day contest, and for April we have "Funny/Humorous", a 12 month contest. For our March program, we will have Karen Genter, a photographer and artist working out of Bowling Green (this is changed from the previous schedule).

Member News

Dave Brewer got an article in *Birds & Blooms Extra* magazine. The article, "Lord of the Dance," includes five of his Reddish Egret pictures from his trip to Florida last year. Congratulations, Dave!

You may notice Joanna Gray's byline in the Flipside section of *The Southern*; she's doing restaurant reviews, and was able to work in a mention of SIPS by quoting Dave Hammond on Debbie J.'s restaurant. Similarly, Ray Brown is getting publicity notices about SIPS out to all of the local papers. At last count he had 11, and was still going.

Many of you know member Dave Morgan, who is currently deployed to Afghanistan. It's been whispered that his 49th birthday is coming up (Mar. 25), and a birthday card from everyone back home seems like a great way to show our support. Send to:

David Morgan

ARSIC-E

FOB Lightning - LTF

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Photo Op

by Jim Osborn

Beautiful Southern

Illinois—By the time you read this, it will be less than a

month before the redbud trees bloom and the crocus & daffodils break ground. Spring rains will flow over the numerous waterfalls in our region and the songbirds will be returning. So...where to go? Here are my top five favorite nature spots to photograph in southern Illinois. I have excluded Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge because of its familiarity. If you haven't been to these other spots, take a trip!

#5—Fountain Bluff and Oakwood Bottoms. I am combining these two locations because of their proximity. They are located a few miles south of the intersection of Rt. 3 and Rt. 149 in the west



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Club members at the Orchid Show at the Missouri Botanical Garden

Missouri Botanical Garden Orchid Show Outing

This month the SIPS club traveled to St. Louis to visit the orchid show "Henry's Garden" being held at the Missouri Botanical Garden. This show featured over 800 orchids from the Garden's collection, arranged in a Victorian setting. Turnout was good; we saw Mike Hicks, Jillan Choate, Jim Bornert, Jane Morgan, Joanna Grey, Jonathan Springer, and even Monroe Webb (looking quite well) there.

The room light was provided by a series of what looked like mercury vapor lamps above. The room contained skylights, but the day was heavily overcast, so while shadows were not a problem, light levels were a bit low. Some members were favoring prime lenses (especially macro), for the additional wide aperture range. Others tried zooms with image stabilization, useful since tripods were not allowed.

After spending the morning there, we had a very good lunch at a local restaurant, Rigazzi's.

The orchid show continues to run through March 15, so for those who didn't get to go yet, there is still time to catch it. Next month's outing will be the Tom Ulrich lecture at SIU-Carbondale on March 16. It will be in Lawson Hall 161, and starts at 7:00pm. This lecture is tends to be popular, so it may be worth coming early to ensure a good (or perhaps any!) seat.

Upcoming Events

There are a number of interesting photography-related events coming up; here are a few that we know about. (As always, let Lu or I know if you see something that we ought to pass along.)

The St. Louis Camera Club is sponsoring a day long seminar on Travel Photography on March 7th, 2009. The seminar features National Geographic Traveler's Jim Richardson. Jim will cover the art of travel photography from planning through overcoming problems on location to how to use your images upon your return. The seminar fee is \$79 and includes the full day seminar, lunch, as well as refreshments at break time. For more information, visit www.stlcameracub.com/2008-09-club-year/2009-seminar/2009-seminar.php.

On March 16, Tom Ulrich will be at SIU-Carbondale, giving a lecture. Tom is a well-known and widely respected nature photographer, and always has great photos to show. The lecture is free, and will start at 7pm in Lawson Hall 161. This will be the SIPS club outing for March, so there should be plenty of SIPS members there too. For more info about Tom, visit his website at www.tomulrichphotos.com.

Coming up March 21 in St. Louis, Missouri Nature & Environmental Photographers (MoNEP) will be hosting an all-day seminar featuring Richard and Susan Day and Willard Clay. Richard and Susan are well-known to our club, and always worth seeing.

Richard and Susan will present "The

Four Seasons of Backyard Wildlife Photography." They will show you how to plant, attract, and photograph in your backyard through the seasons. Susan will explain how to plant and design gardens to attract birds and butterflies using plants that grow well in the St Louis area. She'll include how to incorporate water in the landscape and offer plenty of tips for any sized yard. Richard will show you how to photograph the birds, butterflies, and dragonflies that find your sanctuary. He'll cover birds and butterflies in the garden, birds in winter, and dragonfly photography. You'll learn all about using blinds to obtain the best bird photographs as well as basic equipment needs for all types of backyard wildlife photography. Will Clay's presentation will be on landscape photography, lighting, and the "Decisive moment."

The seminar fee is \$55, and includes a Honey Baked Ham lunch. For more information and to register, visit www.monep.org/seminar/seminars.html.

Also March 21, in Peoria, Jim Zuckerman will be holding a daylong seminar. Jim will be speaking on fundamental things that you can do to immediately and dramatically improve your photography. He will be using his images from around the world to illustrate the points that he believes will have a significant impact on your work. He will share his "eight steps" to more dramatic photography.

- In pursuit of great subjects
- Classic landscape technique
- Think as the lens sees
- How to use natural light
- Depth of field: out of focus backgrounds versus out of focus foregrounds and the problem of distracting backgrounds
- Twilight photography
- Overcoming contrast issues
- Expressing motion

Jim will also explore using Photoshop to improve images.

Tickets are \$59, or \$69 after March 12. Advance tickets do include a lunch. For more information, visit

www.peoriacameraclub.com or email Vicki at vickip@peoriacameraclub.com.

Photo Op

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part of our area. Fountain Bluff is a treat to explore—you can find everything from the Boone Family Cemetery (Daniel's Boone's nephew and relatives) to grandiose views of the Mississippi River to rare and unusual wildflowers to ancient Indian petroglyphs. Oakwood Bottoms is a little further south on Rt. 3. Look for unusual migrating waterfowl, birds and deer.

#4—War Bluff Audubon Conservation Area. This one is a little tricky to find, but it is well worth the trek. It is located about 3 miles west of Rt. 146, a few miles north of Golconda. There are numerous hiking trails with lots of wildflowers and birds.

#3—Mermet Lake. Located about 11 miles south of Vienna off of Rt. 45, Mermet Lake boasts resident eagles and ospreys. Numerous varieties of waterfowl migrate through the area in the spring. Depending on the time of day you may also see deer and wild turkeys. In the spring diamondback water snakes swim close to the shore and Canada Geese can be seen teaching their fledglings how to swim. The cypress trees make this a very picturesque location.

#2—Heron Pond/Cache River Area. Heron Pond boasts an incredible diversity of wildlife and flora. Take the hike to the walkway that goes out into the swamp and you will not forget it. Afterwards, drive over to the Cache River Barkhausen Visitor Center off of Rt. 37 south of Cypress and see the resident eagles. Hummingbirds and numerous songbirds thrive all around the Visitor Center.

#1—LaRue Pine Hills Ecological Area. This is my favorite location in all of southern Illinois. Off of Rt. 3 south of Grand Tower there is a dirt road on the south side of the Big Muddy River (a levee road) that cuts back to the east and connects to a one-lane road that borders the swamp and the bluffs. This road is closed semi-annually so the snakes can migrate between the cliffs and the swamp. Rare plants and endangered species can be found here. Plan to park at the north end and walk in as there is no parking along the VERY rugged road.

Around Town

with Ray Brown

This month, Ray brings us an interview with David Horning.



Ray: Hello David, are you ready to give the interview for the Newsletter?

David: Yes I am.

Ray: How are you doing today and how did your ballgame come out last night?

David: Eldorado won. I left at the end of the third quarter. Lu was there playing with the band.

Ray: Is she the band director?

David: No, they have an alumni band that plays at the basketball games. They have a good time.

Ray: What does she play?

David: She plays a lot of things. Last night she played a baritone.

Ray: Baritone what? A saxophone?

David: I don't know, Hold on and I'll ask her. "Hey what was that thing you played last night?" Oh, she said it was a baby tuba.

Ray: Well that shows you what I know about instruments. I never heard of a baby tuba.

David: Well I don't know much about it either but, she plays flute, clarinet, piano, and all kinds of different stuff.

Ray: Well she is very talented. I never could learn to read music. I tried and just couldn't get it. I sang in my younger days. I was in the chorus for the Rock Island Railroad. We won the Chicago land Music festival. I got to sing with Robert Merrill at Soldier Field with an audience of about 60,000 people. Quite an experience.

David: Well I have trouble tuning a radio.

Ray: Well if you're all set we will do the rest of the interview.

David: OK

Ray: When did you first become interested in photography?

David: I really got interested about four years ago.

Ray: Nothing before that?

David: Well yes, when I was in the army, I learned how to process black and white film and color slides in the photo lab.

Ray: Well that had to be a good experience.

David: I really didn't know much about photography at that time.

Ray: That had to be interesting even if you didn't know a lot about it.

David: Oh yes, it was. Printing in where I worked and when I was all caught up I would go next door to the photo lab and help them.

Ray: Do you consider yourself to be an amateur or a professional photographer?

David: Definitely amateur.

Ray: What was your favorite film camera?

David: I didn't shoot film. Not enough to know anything much about film. When I got serious about it, it's all been digital.

Ray: Is that right. That is odd that you would go from hardly any film to digital. What do you think made you go in that direction?

David: Well, had always loved to hunt and fish. I got out of hunting and needed something to do and decided to try wildlife photography.

Ray: Yeah you mentioned that the other night at the party. I believe Lu still bow hunts?

David: Yes she does.

Ray: Has she got any yet this year?

David: No, not yet.

Ray: Tomorrow is the end of shotgun season.

David: She gets to bow hunt till the end of January.

Ray: What was your first digital camera?

David: The first one was a Canon 20D.

Ray: I know you have had others. What were they?

David: Well as I said the 20D, 30D, 40D and a couple of point and shoot cameras.

Ray: You have quite an assortment. What are you using now?

David: I'm using the 30D and the 40D.

Ray: Are all those lenses interchangeable with all of these cameras?

David: Yes

Ray: Do you work with any darkroom programs such as PhotoShop or any other programs?

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Around Town

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David: Yes I use PhotoShop and Digital Photo Professional for my row images.

Ray: Just those two mostly?

David: Yes mainly.

Ray: You did do some darkroom when you were in the service – correct?

David: Yes, I also did a little in my great-grandfather's darkroom when I got home. I was just playing around – wasn't really into it.

Ray: Have you taken any classes in photography?

David: Yes, I have had a couple of workshops on lighting. Other wise I have learned a lot on the web.

Ray: Have you taught any kind of photography?

David: No, I haven't.

Ray: Do you have one or two favorite web sites that you go to more than some of the others?

David: Yes, I use Photo Camel [www.photocamel.com] and Pbase [www.pbase.com]. They have a lot of stuff on there that I check out.

Ray: Do you have your own website?

David: Yes, pbase.com/harrydavid.

Ray: Do you subscribe to any photo magazines?

David: No, I don't.

Ray: Please name a couple of your favorite photographers.

David: I would have to say David Hammond and Jim Osborne. Now that will get me in trouble with the rest of the crew.

Ray: I was wondering if you had read any books on Stieglitz, Weston, or Ansel Adams.

David: No, maybe I should. I'm not into landscapes at all. Maybe I should because maybe that would help. I've never been able to shoot landscapes.

Ray: Keep working at it and tell me about any other hobbies that you might have.

David: Well I'm a volunteer fire-fighter. I love doing that. I still fish a little.

Ray: What's the biggest fish you have ever caught?

David: That was a bluefish I caught in Chesapeake Bay.

Ray: How about around here?

David: The Biggest would be a six and half pound bass and a catfish about 25 pounds.

Ray: Did you eat them?

David: I don't eat fish but Lu does. She goes with me. She likes to fish also.

Ray: Do you have any place where you have taken photos that you would like to go back to?

David: Yes, Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky, the elk and bison ranges, and the visitor center.

Ray: Any place else?

David: Yes, Crab Orchard. I go there quite often.

Ray: OK, David, it's your turn to tell me anything you would like to have included in this interview, anything at all. It can be about photography or anything you want it to be, anything you want to talk about. Go for it!

David: Well, I would like to say that I love the Southern Illinois Photographic Society. It's been a good place to go to meet friends and make new friends and learn more about photography. I really do enjoy it; the club is such a diverse group. I can learn things from everyone and it's a lot of fun to learn that way.

Ray: What you say is so true. I really enjoy your people photographs.

David: I enjoy people photography and I never dreamed I would.

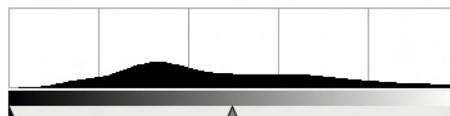
Ray: I'll back up here to ask when you did hunt. What did you hunt?

David: Mostly deer. Also rabbits, squirrels, quail, ducks, and geese.

Ray: Anything else you want to talk about?

David: No, I think we have it covered.

Ray: I think you're right. Thanks so much for your time. Please carry on with your hobby that you love so much. You will be oh so happy if you do. I think a lot of sad people are sad because they don't have any kind of a hobby. I can't imagine!



From the Secretary

by Jonathan Springer

This month, I thought I would get into a technical topic a bit, and talk about image histograms. This topic merits more space than I can devote here, but perhaps this can serve as a starting point.

A histogram (for those of us for whom math class is a distant memory) is just a graph that shows how many of something there are in a number of categories. Those categories are given positions next to each other along the horizontal axis, and the count for each one is the height of the line or bar at that place on the axis.

In a digital picture, the picture is made up of millions of colored dots, each of which is called a pixel (literally, "picture element"). Each pixel has an intensity value for each of the three primary colors red, green, and blue; for now, just imagine it as one combined intensity value. In a typical image format such as a JPEG, this value ranges from 0 to 255 (a range of 2⁸, or "8-bit"). RAW formats are often 0 to 4095 ("12 bit"), one reason why they are better for postprocessing. These intensity values are our "categories"; the horizontal axis in our histogram ranges from intensity 0 at the far left side to intensity 255 on the far right. The height of the bar at each position on the horizontal axis is the number of pixels that had that intensity value.

There are no absolute right or wrong histograms, since it depends on the effect you are trying to achieve with your photo, but there are some general guidelines. Ideally, most of the height is in the middle. A histogram with most of the height at the left edge tends to mean the picture is underexposed, while if most of the peaks are towards the right, it is overexposed. Furthermore, if there is a large peak at the rightmost edge, you have saturated the sensor and typically lost detail from the scene (e.g. blown highlights) that cannot be recovered in postprocessing. Similarly for a large peak at the left, indicating areas of pure black.

For more detail, there's a nice article with several examples of pictures and histograms at <http://www.luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/understanding-series/understanding-histograms.shtml>.