



# Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com  
April 2009 Newsletter

## April Meeting

This month we welcomed Steve Schlaeger as our featured speaker on the topic of aerial photography. Steve, an experienced pilot, has been doing aerial photography professionally for a number of years, and offered his view on the history and practice of this technique that relatively few photographers have had an opportunity to try.

Steve walked us through some of the very early beginnings of aerial photography, when it was a "wet plate" hoisted into the air by a tethered balloon. Aerial photography became integral to military intelligence in WWI, and has remained essential ever since.

Steve got his start due to his experience as a pilot, and most of his work is for real estate companies, who like to get a good overview of an area before building commercial properties. He presented several great examples of his work, including Carterville, Herrin/Energy development area, Bald Knob Cross, and Cedar Lake.

One of the most important things Steve emphasized was to always use a separate pilot when doing aerial photography - don't try to fly and take pictures at the same time. Also, go over all details with the pilot before leaving the ground, since communication is much more difficult in the noisy environment of the plane. On the subject of equipment, Steve noted it is useful to consider the camera form factor: smaller, lighter cameras are more maneuverable in the tight spaces in a plane and less tiring to use. Steve uses a 40D but favors a lighter lens over some of the big, heavy glass. The Canon G10 is also becoming his favorite, for its nice size and its clarity.

Another tip Steve mentioned is not touching any part of the plane while taking the picture; the vibrations will transfer to the camera. The best times to take aerial pictures are (perhaps surprisingly for land lubbers, who love the warm early morning or late afternoon light) in the middle of the day, since this is when the shadows will be

shortest. Shooting after a rain is best for the lowest amount of haze. A polarizing filter and a UV/haze filter can also be beneficial. When taking pictures out an open window (which is best for clarity), always remember to wrap the strap around your wrist before opening it - the wind can tear the camera out of your hand. Best is to be able to sit back keeping the camera wholly within the plane while you shoot.

Our featured member this month was Jonathan Springer. He focused on his photos from the last twelve months, featuring subjects from his travels as well as around home and his original hometown of Nashville. While he travels for work, the view of parking lots and conference rooms does get a bit monotonous photographically. He finds that early morning or early evening is convenient for being both good times to get away to take pictures and the best photographically. Jonathan's photo locations included San Francisco, upstate New York, Virginia Beach, and Washington D.C.

Our photo contest topic this month was "humor". We had entries from 11 members, out of which the following were voted best:

1st place: Jim Osborn

2nd place: Jim Osborn

3rd place: Dave Brewer

Next month's contest topic is "eggs"; this is a two-month contest.

We had 41 people at our meeting this month. We welcomed new faces Amy and Steve Duncan, as well as new member Dean Maddox.

## Photo Op

by Jim Osborn

This month I thought I would share a few tips and tricks for taking better nature shots. The biggest issue in trying to get decent images of wildlife is the distance of the critter(s) from your camera. Unless you have a good telephoto lens (300mm or longer) you may be disappointed in your photos when you find that the subject is so small that it is hardly recognizable. Recently, I was in



*cont'd on page 3 - Photo Op*

## Calendar of Events

### May

Meeting: May 5

Program: Dan Overturf

Featured Member: Dana Tetzlaff

Contest: Eggs (60 day)

Outing: Piney Creek Ravine, May 16

Planning Meeting: May 19

### June

Meeting: Jun. 2

Program: Composition, Nancy Smolak

Featured Member: Jillian Choate

Contest: Macro (12 month)

Outing: Annual Picnic, Giant City State Park, Jun. 13

Planning Meeting: Jun. 16

Planning Meeting: Jun. 16

Planning Meeting: Jun. 16

### July

Meeting: Jul. 7

Program: Critiquing, Jim Osborn

Featured Member: George Stone

Contest: Mystery Tour, route TBA

May 5 (12 month)

Outing: TBD

Planning Meeting: Jul. 21

## Inside...

Meeting and outing reports, member news, a very topical Photo Op, and an in-depth Around Town.

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## LaRue-Pine Hills Outing

The outing this month was to the LaRue-Pine Hills Research Natural Area, southwest of Murphysboro along State Route 3. La Rue is known for its biannual snake migration across LaRue road at the base of the bluffs. The snakes (and other reptiles and amphibians) migrate across the road in the spring to move from their protected winter habitats near the bluffs to



their summer habitats in the wetlands, and vice versa in the fall. The road is closed during the migration, offering a good opportunity to observe the wildlife. We had a number of members attend, including Mike Hicks, Dave Morgan, Linda Bundren, Donald McDonald, Linda Martin, Dave Hammond, Jillian Choate, and Jonathan Springer. Most of us parked at the north end of the road and walked south. It had rained a lot recently so the road was fairly wet, and in fact blocked by water at one point (which puddles were teeming with frogs). At least two cottonmouths were spotted and photographed (one of which was nearly tripped over by your faithful reporter Jonathan). Before heading down to the Natural Area, a number of members also met at 17th Street in Murphysboro for some barbecue.

*Club members Donald McDonald and Dave Morgan on the LaRue-Pine Hills outing, Apr. 18*

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## Member News and Upcoming Events

Dave Brewer is speaking on "Wildlife Photography & You," for students going into wildlife management. He has an April 25 photo show with Naturefest at the Wetlands Center; Sat., May 2 and May 9 at the Wetlands Center.

Dave Hammond was published in EXPRESSIONS from NANPA. This prestigious selection recognizes his photo as one of the top 250 images from 2008.

Ray Brown had a photo published in the Southern Illinoisan recently.

Ray has also been taking pictures for the member directory, which is now available for download. The directory will be updated as pictures come in, so it's not too late!

Joan Levy and Marlene Webb have an art show at the West Frankfort Country

Club this month.

Rene DeGroof had some of his race track photos appear on Channel 3 News.

Rene is also continuing to form trips on Wednesdays; email him to get "in the know" for upcoming ones. His group has gone to two different trails at Giant City lately. They will be going to the Dogwood Festival in Charleston, MO, and will be doing Grant Park in St. Louis soon. He has gotten help from Jan Sundberg, Jane Morgan, and Joyce Siason in organizing these trips.

Jim Osborn relayed that HerrinFesta Italiana is having a photo contest. Details are on their web site, <http://www.herrinfesta.com/art>.

*If you have member news to report, we do relay things announced at the meeting, but also feel free to email one of the secretaries directly. Thank you!*

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## Around Town

*with Ray Brown*

*This month, Ray interviews member David Morgan.*



Ray: Hello Dave. Do you have time to give me an interview?

David: Yes sir I have time for an interview.

Ray: Well, we will get started with this question. When did you first become interested in photography?

David: I was a little kid about eight or nine. My mother gave me a little camera when we went to the St. Louis Zoo. I took pictures of a zebra and some other animals.

Ray: Do you still have those pictures?

David: No, I don't know what happened to them. My mother's house burnt and I guess they are long gone.

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

David: I am an amateur for sure, but I really have a good time taking photos.

Ray: What kind of a camera did you have at the beginning?

David: I had a 110 camera. I don't remember what kind it was. Later I borrowed a 110 from my mother and took it to Alaska when I had some winter training there. I took some pretty good pictures there until the camera froze and broke. That was early in the 80's. I had a couple of Polaroids in that time period. I also had a Disk camera. I don't remember what brand it was. I had that when my first baby was born. I really liked that camera till they stopped making film for it.

Ray: I have one of those cameras. It was my mom's camera. When you were taking film, did you ever have a 35mm camera?

David: Yes I did.

Ray: Did you take much in the way of black and white?

David: No I didn't. I took mostly color. I took more black and white with the 110. Color was more expensive at that time. I just stayed with the black and white.

Ray: What kind of film did you use at that time Plus-X or Super-X or whatever?

David: I don't remember too long ago.

*cont'd on page 3 - Around Town*



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## Photo Op

*cont'd from p. 1*

Springfield where a bald eagle's nest had been sighted for the first time in recent memory. I drove to the site to try to get some photos, but the nest was at least 500 yards away. None-the-less, I watched a woman with a digital point and shoot camera trying to get a picture of the nest. I passed on the opportunity. For the most part, if you want to get decent images of wildlife you have to get close close. In lieu of taking out a second mortgage on your house to buy a good 500mm or even a 600mm lens, here are a few tips that may help you.

1. Larger animals will provide better imaging opportunities than smaller animals (DUH!!). You don't need to be as close to deer or turkeys to get decent shots as you would have to be for Goldfinches or dragonflies. Concentrate on what you can realistically shoot with your equipment.

2. Your car can be a blind. For best results, turn the car off at your selected location to eliminate vibration and noise. Have the window rolled down. Turn the radio off and have your camera ready for action. Then, avoid making quick movements. Some people even wear camo gloves when shooting like this. Pop-up blinds can also work well and can be purchased at local sporting goods stores.

3. Get a window mount for your camera. There are numerous models available on the market. They attach to your car window (when partially rolled up) and provide the steadiness that a tripod would provide. Obviously, the steadier your camera, the better the picture. However, if you elect to get a window mount, be aware of the following: (a) small plastic mounts may not be sturdy enough to hold a heavy DSLR and lens; (b) some window mounts have a lever handle for moving the ball head—I have found that the extended lever gets in the way when I am trying to look through the viewfinder of my camera, and (c) some larger (and more expensive mounts) can damage your car window if they have too much weight and too much torque put on the window.

4. Try a teleconverter. A teleconverter extends the focal length of your lens by

1.4X, 2X, or even 3X. Just know that adding a teleconverter also reduces the amount of light that reaches the sensor (thus increasing the smallest f-stop you can use) and adds more glass for the image to pass through. This can affect sharpness.

5. BE PATIENT!! Animals need to be comfortable with their environment. If you are waiting and watching from your car, be patient—the car is a new element in the environment. If they see the car but don't feel threatened you could be rewarded.

Try some of these ideas and see if your photos don't improve.

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## Around Town

*cont'd from p. 2*

Ray: What was your favorite film camera?

David: I would say that first disk camera because it seemed to take good pictures.

Ray: What was your first digital camera?

David: Jane and I went to Niagara Falls and toured the east coast in the summer of 2000. We took about 12-15 rolls of film and don't have the photos to prove it. The next year we were still using film. We both had a camera. We took our own pictures. That way we made sure we had photos, after what happened the year before. Then we bought the little Kodak 3.2 digital. I took that with me when I went to Iraq in 2003. Since then we have had some viruses and lost some pictures. I wish we had them as I would like to look at them to find out how much progress I have made when it comes to taking photos today.

Ray: When you did shoot film did you ever have the opportunity to do anything in a darkroom?

David: No I didn't but I have always thought I wanted to try. Just never had the opportunity to do that.

Ray: Now with digital, do you work with a digital darkroom such as Photoshop or anything like that?

David: No, I have had a couple of classes to learn how to use that but I still haven't done anything with it.

Ray: Have you taken any other classes?

David: Yes, I took a Rene class. I forget what that was called. Jane and I have

been to some seminars where they talked about digital darkrooms. As I said I just haven't done anything along those lines.

Ray: The class you took with Rene, was that a film class or a digital class?

David: That was a digital class. Jane is a lot better at that stuff than I am.

Ray: Have you ever taught photography?

David: No, I've never taught a class. I did help my oldest daughter. She was given a disposable camera as a class project. Her assignment was "what's good in the environment and what's bad." I let her take all of the photos. It was her project but I tried to set photos up for her. Her last photo was what's good. I took her to Rend Lake at sunset by the boat dock. There were two trees sticking up out of the water. I told her what I wanted the picture to look like. She had to walk around until she was happy with what she thought I described. She took the picture of the sun between two trees and the sun's rays on the water. Then she had to explain to the teacher that she took the photo and not her parents.

Ray: How old was she at that time?

David: She was about eight or nine years old. I was really proud of her to be able to hold the camera still enough to get decent photos.

Ray: Do you have a favorite photography web site?

David: No I don't.

Ray: Do you subscribe to any photo magazines?

David: Yes, Shutterbug, Popular Photography. Jane sent me some stuff and Rene sent me some things to read. It's all overseas at my camp.

Ray: Who is a couple of your favorite photographers?

David: Oh let me think. I like Ansel Adams, George Lepp, Tom Ulrich, Richard Day, and Dave Brewer. I like Dave Brewer's seminars that he does for and about the Cache River.

Ray: Can you tell me about any other hobbies that you enjoy?

David: Well I do treasure hunting. It's called geocaching. That's done using a hand-held GPS.

Ray: When we went to Fountain Bluff

*cont'd on page 4 - Around Town*

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## Around Town

*cont'd from p. 3*

you were looking for a hidden cache. I don't remember if you found it or not.

David: Yea, I have found two or three caches while on photography trips. The last one I found was on a trip to Land Between the Lakes.

Ray: There was a church up in the hills and I found the treasure that was there. That's got to be a lot of fun.

David: Yes, it is. I really enjoy doing it. It takes me to a lot of interesting places. Some times it's a history lesson and sometimes it's something to take a picture of. One time I was at a place and I wondered why am I here. I turned around and there was a babbling brook right on a bend in the brook. I took a lot of photos. It was a really nice place. Then I thought oh that's why I'm here. Another spot was called "Working" and the sign said "like a dog." That turned out to be "Hard Day's Night." That's the place that George Harrison stayed when his sister owned that house in Benton in 1963. So that is a good history lesson.

Ray: Yes, I know about that house. We have an old chest of drawers that came from that house. What else do you like to do?

David: I do gardening. I can't do it this year but in the past we have had the best looking yard on the block. Our back yard looks like gardens. I enjoy mowing the yard and making it look good. Next year I'll make it look good again. I also like to travel.

Ray: Do you have any place that you have been taking pictures that you would like to go back to?

David: Yes, there are a lot of places I would like to go back to. The Grand Canyon, Grand Cayman Islands, Niagara Falls, any big city St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland. Those are places I would like to go back to. Jane and I would like to go to all 50 states before we are out of our 50's.

Ray: Dave, could you tell me again about some of the things you have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan?

David: In Afghanistan there is not trash along the roads because they burn everything for heat and to cook. This is

different than Iraq because they have a lot of trash and who-knows-what along the roadsides.

Ray: Can you tell me what are the differences between the two societies?

David: I have only dealt with the people in the rural areas of both countries. I haven't had contact with the city people. It's amazing to me they way they live and still they have electronic equipment that blows my mind. They have cell phones and who knows what else and still they live in squalor.

Ray: Tell me again about how they wear their clothes.

David: Last month I helped with physical examinations for the new Afghan National Army. This was in March. They hadn't bathed yet this year. They had been in this camp for a week before we arrived at this camp. There is water available for bathing and showers. They have washers and dryers and still they are wearing clothes that look like something your dog layed on all winter and you can't wait till springtime so you can throw it away. These guys are wearing this stuff. Again there are washers and dryers there for them to use. It's a life style choice instead of a necessity.

Ray: I think you told me that not many of these people wear glasses.

David: One of the things I was doing when I was doing those physical exams was vital signs. I was doing blood pressure, temp, and pulse. I was doing visual acutities. Very few of them would have access to an optometrist. Some of them could sure use one. I had a translator to tell them what I wanted them to tell me in regards to which way the letters were pointing - up, down, right, or left. The commander of the Afghan Army was upset because I was failing people. My commander hopped up and said that doesn't mean he is bad; it just means that he needs glasses.

Ray: Was their commander upset that you said they needed glasses?

David: Yes

Ray: Now the people that you were around, how much education do you think they had?

David: Very little. Less than 10% of the country can read. Up until recently girls were not allowed to go to school. When

the Taliban showed up they put in Islamic law which says that women can't work. So there goes your teachers' health care workers. Anything they were doing they can't do now. Men must do the shopping. If a woman goes anyplace she must be accompanied by a male person. If a woman's husband is killed or just dies she has to move in with family or friends just so she can eat. Their way of life is completely different than ours. A woman's job is to take care of the animals and the kids and to cook.

Ray: Do you have anything you would like to have included in this interview that we haven't touched on up to now? It's your turn to tell me anything you want to have included.

David: I really enjoy being a member of the club. I like going on the outings. I've learned a lot. I've made a lot of friends and looking forward to more participation in the club when my mission is over. I just thought about another difference between Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq is very, very flat. On a real clear day I could see 60 miles. In Afghanistan I'm up in the mountains that are snow covered. I'm at 7500 feet elevation. In Iraq I was at 35 feet above sea level. The desert is just flat and very hot. Where I'm at the air is very thin. It took me a couple of months before I wasn't struggling in the morning to breathe. Before I came home for this visit I was just getting able to do exercises and not get as winded. I was getting used to the thinner air.

Ray: That wouldn't be a good place for any one with a bad heart.

David: That is correct. I just remembered another hobby that Jane and I have. We are members of the Midwest Gateway Miata Club. We drive our cars around and we go to a lot of interesting places. We went to Indianapolis and got to drive on the Indy 500 Racetrack. We have done the covered bridge tour.

Ray: That is north of Terre Haute, Indiana.

David: We drive in Missouri on roads that have a lot of hills and curves. It's really nice to see new and different places and things. While at these places I take a lot of photos.

*cont'd on page 5 - Around Town*



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## Around Town

*cont'd from p. 4*

Ray: You guys should take a trip to Vincennes, Indiana. In the early days of our country the Northwest Territory legislators met in Vincennes. The Northwest Territory because the states of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. Lincoln saw his first printing press in Vincennes. William Henry Harrison's house is still there. Vincennes had the first Masonic lodge in Indiana. A lot of history is in Vincennes.

David: I forgot to tell you what kind of cameras I have now. I always try to carry a camera with me. My mission is to support the Afghan National Army and the National Police. We are training technicians so the Afghan army can conduct military operations by themselves. We are able to be self-sufficient and to do any mission we have to do on our own. We can just do it. I'm

training them in medical, operations and tactics.

Ray: You can do it on your own if you have to, right?

David: Yes, I can do that.

Ray: That is very, very interesting. You learn a lot of things in the army.

David: Yes, I have learned quite a bit.

Ray: You have told me a lot of really neat stuff.

David: I think that's all I can talk about for now. I think the club members will find all of this interesting.

Ray: Well it sure is different. Dave, I want you to know that you and your buddies are in my prayers every day. Thank you so much for what you and your buddies do for us.

*Ray caught up with David while he was home on a two-week furlough. David has since returned to Afghanistan, where he is currently on a six-month deployment.*

## Things I've Noticed

*by Ray Brown*

### Only in America:

Do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a Diet Coke.

Do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we don't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place.

Do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Do we have drive up ATM's with Braille lettering.

### The Ten Commandments of How to Get Along with People

(not sure to whom to give credit)

1. Keep skid chains on your tongue. Always say less than you think. Cultivate a low, persuasive voice. How you say it often counts more than what you say.

2. Make promises sparingly, and keep them faithfully, no matter what the cost.

3. Never let an opportunity pass to say kind and encouraging words to or about somebody. Praise good work regardless of who did it. If criticism is needed, offer it gently, never harshly.

More next month.

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One of the challenges with a project like this is getting the data right. It's perhaps inevitable that some of it will be missing or wrong, but please let me know and I'll do my best to correct it.

(Conversely, if there's information in there that you don't want in the directory, I'm perfectly happy to remove it. It's entirely up to you.) One of the things that is perhaps most lacking is member photos. These should be 8x10 aspect ratio, and if you're considering the level of detail keep in mind that the ultimate size is relatively modest on the page. I prefer you use the upload site I mailed about, but if you do email the image itself it'd be nice if it were reduced in size a bit to help keep my inbox from exploding.

I've got the process fairly automated, so I hope to regenerate the directory fairly often, hopefully whenever there are updates. As always, let me know if you have any comments or suggestions!



*U.S. Marines assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, wait aboard a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft at Manas Air Base, Kyrgyz Republic, March 27, 2008, to be flown to Kandahar Air Base in the Helman province of Afghanistan. U.S. Marine photo by Lance Cpl. Jason T. Guiliano, obtained from [defenselink.mil](http://defenselink.mil).*

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## From the Secretary

*by Jonathan Springer*

The member directory, long rumored but rarely seen, will be making a more visible appearance this month. I've been burning

a bit of midnight oil (in fact it's 8 past as I write this) to get this in shape, but it finally seems to be more or less in order. This directory will be made available to members (only) soon, so look for an email about how to access it.