



Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com

March 2010 Newsletter

February Meeting

At our February meeting we welcomed Steve Smith and Robert Daun, who gave a terrific program on underwater photography. Illustrated with many examples from their own dives, Steve and Robert introduced us to an aspect of photography that most of us have never had a chance to try. They showed some great pictures of fish, sunken wrecks, and some of the less-readily identifiable inhabitants of the depths.

In their underwater photography, they use standard cameras with special waterproofing enclosures. Light is often dim at best, so they use flash and extra lights to illuminate their subjects. Holding still is also a challenge, and coordinating shooting with breathing becomes especially important. Finally, it is important to be aware of one's surroundings and the dangers, and not get too focused on taking pictures.

Steve and Robert are staff members at Mermet Springs, where they are involved in scuba training. They frequently host beginner classes at the John A. Logan College pool, and lead drive trips to tropical locations. For more information, visit mermetsprings.com.

We had some interesting show and tell pictures this month, starting with Jim Osborn, who had the distinction of being the sole attendee of the Alton Eagle outing. Dave Brewer showed us some excellent pictures of a bobcat that he was fortunate enough to get close to. Going farther afield, Dave Hammond showed us some photos he got on a recent trip to Florida.

SIPS members have been active outside the club as well. Joan Skiver-Levy held an exhibition at John A. Logan College. Dave Hammond will have a photo in the upcoming National Geographic Butterfly calendar. Linda Martin will have a photo in the March/April Audubon magazine. Finally, many of our members converged on SIU in Carbondale to hear Tom Ulrich's annual talk there.

Our contest this month was "Red." We

had a very robust field, with 22 entries. It was a very close contest—all of the entries received votes.

1st place: Linda Martin, "Cardinal Reflection"

2nd place: Jim Osborn, "Lifesaver"

3rd place: Jim Bornert, "Red 1"

Congratulations!

Photo Op

by Jim Osborn

This is the second installment of explanations for the technical challenges included in the Technical Excellence Photography Contest. I had planned to hit all 10 challenges in five articles, but I concede that some subjects require more explanation than others. This month's topic falls into that category. Last month I discussed both shallow and deep depth of field. Item 3 of the ten challenges involves Macro imaging.

When I first started in photography, the term "macro" threw me. I think of large scale when I think of the term macro, such as in "macro-economics;" and I think of "micro" when I'm thinking of small scale such as "microscope." However, in the world of photography both "micro" and "macro" refer to creating an image of a subject which, in a standard 4" X 6" print, will appear larger than it actually is (that's my definition anyway). While telephoto images do this, macro involves taking the small world and making it larger. Whole books are written about macro photography and if you wish to experiment beyond the scope of this contest I urge you to buy one. Macro lenses (usually identified as such) are designed for the primary purpose of making small objects large. They usually range in focal lengths from 60mm to 180mm and can be quite costly. The macro capability of a lens is usually shown in a ratio ranging from 1:3 to 1:1. The best close-up macro lenses have ratios of 1:1. Do you need a macro lens? No. Some camera stores and online merchants sell



Calendar of Events

March

Meeting: Mar. 2

Program: Marketing Images and Copyright, Dave Hammond

15 Minutes of Fame: Dave Morgan

Contest: Snow/winter (2 month)

Outing: Burden Falls & Belle Smith Springs, Pope Co., Mar. 27

Planning Meeting: Mar. 16

April

Meeting: Apr. 6

Program: Travel Photography: Brazil Pantanal, Linda Martin

15 Minutes of Fame: Bill Lipscomb

Contest: Black and white

Outing: TBD

Planning Meeting: Mar. 16

May

Meeting: May 4

Program: TBD

15 Minutes of Fame: Bill Thomas

Contest: TBD

Outing: TBD

Planning Meeting: May 18

Inside...

Meeting news, Photo Op., The Adventure Behind the Photo, and the return of Around Town!

Have something for the newsletter? Contact SIPS at info@sipscameraclub.com.

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Lightning at Grand Canyon (photo: Christine Keeney)

The Adventure Behind the Photo

by Christine Keeney

The Grand Canyon. One of the great wonders of the world. Every photographer strives to capture this amazing sight. Capture something unique, that they can take home with them and remember and, well, analyze. My trip to the Canyon was no different. I was awestruck, impressed, speechless... I wanted to capture every nuance so that I could take as much of this experience home with me as I could.

I traveled to the North rim, then to the South rim. I stayed nearby and went back and forth more than once a day. I found different nooks, crannies, and angles. I took dozens, if not hundreds of pictures. I then headed to see more of the state, drove west to the West rim, then south to see the London Bridge. But the Canyon kept pulling me, so I left Phoenix and headed up once more.

I knew that it would be a long time, if ever, before I would be able to go back so I cut the rest of my exploring short and headed back to the North Rim. The North Rim is not as populated as the other rims, the weather can be quite a bit more fierce and there are not as many accommodations here. But the view - incomparable.

I had talked a cousin that lives in

Phoenix into making this second trip with me. She had been to the Canyon, but never the North Rim. We couldn't stay at the resort on the North Rim, so we booked a room at the next closest hotel. In the morning we made the 30 minute drive and started exploring. Once again I was struck speechless. I loved every aspect of this magnificent scene. I couldn't absorb enough. Or take enough pictures. Then the storm moved in. What a storm! Dark roiling clouds, thunderous booms echoing through the deep crevice, and lightning, spears of light shooting straight down to the ground from the massive black clouds. Joy, my cousin, hot-footed it back to the car to take cover with a thick book. Not for me! I stayed and I shot, click after click after click. I wanted it all.

I was using a Nikon point and shoot at the time. I had read tips about capturing lightning, but they were all for DSLRs and they taught how to keep the shutter open. I didn't have this option with my point and shoot. I couldn't capture this lightning. Then I thought of something: multi-shots. I changed the setting to get to this burst mode and started again. I could see the storm coming closer across the divide and see the lightning come out of specific clouds. I started aiming at one of these clouds and holding the release down every few seconds. People were rushing back to the resort all around me,

trips down were being cancelled and those who had already started the hike were rushing back. I didn't budge - I wanted the shot, lightning in the canyon. Snap, snap, snap; miss, miss, miss. Over and over again I tried and tried. The storm got closer and closer, and oh no, my memory card started to fill up. Then suddenly, I had it, I knew it, felt it all the way through me, I had finally captured the shot. I was ecstatic. I knew it with everything in me that I

had finally captured what I wanted.

And still the storm moved closer, so I kept snapping, just in case, no time to check for sure. Finally the downpour became too much for me to gamble my camera in, I had been covering myself from the light downpour with the hoodie that I was wearing, but this was becoming saturated and it was nearly impossible to keep shielding my camera. So, I turned for the car. This experience beyond exhilarated me, I laughed out loud as I jogged and skipped back to my car. I had captured a shot that I had thought would be impossible with my point and shoot. I couldn't wait to see it. I took over 170 shots while I was shooting in burst mode, but finally I found it, and it was everything I could hope it would be. I want to go out into a thunderstorm again now that I have a DSLR, but with a little quick thinking on my feet I was able to capture something that I had thought might be impossible with only my point and shoot. This is still one photograph that I am extremely proud of and pull out to look at and remember every so often.

Event Planning

The SIPS board is planning outings, and if there's an area that you think would be great for us to visit, please do let the board know, either at a meeting or by email. Your input helps make the club better!

Around Town

with Ray Brown

Hello everyone. It's been a while since I've had an interview in the newsletter.



I'm hoping to say your ace reporter is back and I hope at full steam. Part of my absence was my fault. I had some things that had to be worked out.

So here we go. This interview is with Lynn Love. Thanks for having a lot of patience.

Ray: Well Lynn, if you're ready we will start the interview.

Lynn: Oh, well, I don't know how this goes, but I will try my best.

Ray: When did you first become interested in photography?

Lynn: Fairly recently. I always took family pictures but I wasn't really interested in photography. I guess what really got me going was the digital camera coming out. I retired in 2005. A couple of years before that I coached volleyball. I tried with the digital camera getting action shots. That's when I got the bug to try and do something different than just snapping pictures of friends and family and that sort of thing. I am pretty much a newcomer as far as trying to take control of the camera and do something with it.

Ray: I think you consider yourself to be an amateur photographer. Is that how you feel?

Lynn: Yes, that's about the way I think about that.

Ray: When you did shoot film, what kind of camera did you use?

Lynn: Oh, I used just an Instamatic or whatever it was. I don't remember.

Ray: Did you shoot any 35mm cameras?

Lynn: No.

Ray: Did you use any kind of black and white film that you can tell me about?

Lynn: Not really. Perhaps some black and white Polaroid. You had very little control on what you could do as it was developed in your hand.

Ray: Now that you work with a digital camera, what kind of digital camera do you have?

Lynn: The first digital we had, my mother shared it. It was an Olympus 3.2

megapixel. Now that I look back on that camera it was a pretty good camera, although I did want a better camera. So I went with an Olympus 765 because I wanted more ultra zooming power. I've always been interested in the zooming part of the camera. I guess a lot of people don't care about that, but I do. My second camera was still a point and shoot. It served me well. I retired in 2005 from teaching. I then took a trip to Colorado and took a class on photography. After that class I decided I should have an SLR. That kind of threw me for a loop for a while, you know, with all the terminology, which I wasn't used to. It seems pretty normal now. I just had to learn what all this new stuff meant. After that I got a Canon Rebel XTR.

Ray: Is that what you have now?

Lynn: Yes, that's what I have now. Last year I got a Canon point and shoot. It has a 20 power zoom. I got that for trips and things like that so as not to have to lug around the big one.

Ray: When you were in high school and college did you ever do any darkroom work?

Lynn: No, never did.

Ray: Since you got your digital camera, have you ever taken any photography classes?

Lynn: Yes, I have taken three Elderhostel classes. They are five days long. Pretty much all day in the classroom. Then we go out on trips. It's central ideas about photography, some to teach you how to edit, some to teach you computer work. Like I said, we took all three of those classes.

Ray: Can you tell me if you have two or three favorite websites?

Lynn: I don't mess with it much at all. I have dial-up and it takes forever.

Ray: That's what we have and on top of that I don't know what the hell I'm doing. Have never had anyone explain it to me so I can understand it.

Ray: Do you subscribe to any photography magazines, and if so, which ones?

Lynn: Yes, I get Shutterbug and Popular Photography.

Ray: Any others?

Lynn: No, that's the only ones I get.

Ray: Who are two or three of the photographers that you most admire?

Lynn: I really like Ansel Adams. I like his pictures of the mountains of the Western United States. I really enjoy nature and wildlife photography. I haven't gotten into landscapes that much. His landscapes are amazing.

Ray: Of course he was working with a very large negative. Mostly 8x10 and 5x7 and some even larger than that. That makes a big difference. Have you ever noticed a picture of Ansel Adams? His nose was very crooked. That was caused by the great San Francisco earthquake. He was just a small child and it knocked him down and he broke his nose. Back in those times they never tried to straighten it, and that's why he had a crooked nose. Another tidbit about Adams that a lot of people don't know: He was an accomplished concert pianist. I heard him play-quite a thrill for me.

Ray: Please tell me about any other hobbies you have.

Lynn: I have quite a few. I play golf. I do stained glass work. I enjoy gardening, mostly flowers. I enjoy bridge. And I like to ride my own motorcycle.

Ray: You said you taught school and retired in 2005. What did you teach?

Lynn: I taught math at Marion High School. I taught for thirty-four years. I taught eight years at the junior high and then twenty-six years at the high school.

Ray: You told me you coached volleyball for twenty-six years at the high school.

Lynn: I have continued coaching at the junior high school since I retired. That is fun as the kids are really into it at that age.

Ray: What place where you have taken pictures would you like to go back to?

Lynn: I would like to go back to the mountains out west, pretty much anywhere, and take a lot of pictures. Yellowstone and many, many more places.

Ray: Well, Lynn, I have asked a lot of questions of you. Now it's your turn to tell me anything you would like to have in this interview. Tell me and I will include it...anything at all. Go girl!

Lynn: Well, in one of the classes I took

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Horseshoe Lake Outing

This past month, SIPS members went down to the Horseshoe Lake area to check out the wildlife. We met at the Union County State Fish & wildlife Area, west of Jonesboro and about half an hour north of Horseshoe Lake. There were geese in abundance there, across the road from the Conservation Area office. A couple hours later, we rendezvoused for an early lunch at a local place in Olive Branch. Then, we headed down to the lake itself. Besides the waterfowl, members spotted a coyote as well as the bald eagle show above. The outing was attended by Jim Osborn, Dave and Lu Horning, Dave Brewer, Linda Bundren, Jo Dodd, Ruth Hilton, Monroe Webb, and Jonathan Springer.



Bald Eagle at Horseshoe Lake (photo: Jim Osborn)

The Technical Side

by Jonathan Springer

A short installment this month, due to space. The question I would like to answer is, what makes a lens "macro"? Essentially, it is the ability of the lens to focus closely relative to the angle of view. For a telephoto lens, the angle of view is small, so it doesn't have to focus as closely in order to get the same macro effect (magnification factor) as a wide-angle lens. A lens that can focus more closely has to be able to bend light more sharply, so, other things being equal, such a lens will be more expensive than a similar non-macro lens.

Macro lenses are measured by their magnification factor or ratio. A lens being 1:1 means that an object that is 1mm across in the focal plane (see last month's column) will have an image 1mm across in the film plane. Such a lens is also called "life size."

Around Town

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out west a lady told me to check out my own area to see if there was a photo club. She told me she was sure there might be if there were any universities in my area. She said that was a great way to get the information that would help me. I checked around and found S.I.P.S. So that was very good advice that she gave me. I have found out it's a great way to keep learning and to learn from others. It's been a good experience for me to have joined the club.

Ray: Anything else?

Lynn: No, I just enjoy seeing everyone's work. We have some good photographers in our club. I want to say I enjoy the newsletter very much. I like both of your columns, and I like Jim's columns.

Ray: Thank you very much for your time. I know it took me a long time to get this in the newsletter. As I said before, I had a big problem. I didn't give up and here it is. That problem will never happen again. Thanks again!

Photo Op

cont'd from p. 1

"close up filters" which attach to your standard lenses and act as a magnifying glass. They are a lot cheaper than buying a macro lens but have their own limitations. Do you need close-up filters? No. Many digital cameras have a macro function on the dial. If you choose to use that mode the camera will self-adjust to the optimum settings needed to take close-up shots. If you are using a standard lens for a macro shot, you will need to be REAL close to the object. Since most lenses have functional limitations on how close they can be to the subject they are focusing on, you may be limited in how much you can enlarge the image. Also, close-up work often requires additional lighting and if you try to use the flash on your camera or a flash mounted on the hot-shoe it may shoot right over the top of the subject you are trying to illuminate. Thus, someone invented the ring-light. A ring-light attaches directly to the lens and encircles it. Thus, when fired, a close subject is always lit. Do you need a ring light? No. All of these things help, but none are absolutely necessary. When shooting macro images here are my three top tips: (1) use the lens that you are most comfortable with; (2) get as close to the subject as you can; (3) get as much light on the subject as you can; and (4) use a tripod. When shooting up-close you always have a very shallow depth of field, perhaps less than 1mm on super macro images. So make sure you know what you want to be in focus. Because you are working at very close quarters, you absolutely need a tripod. The very slightest camera shake can make your image blurry. You may have heard the term "focusing rail" at one time. A focusing rail attaches to your tripod. You mount your camera on the focusing rail. The focusing rail then allows you to make incredibly small incremental adjustments between the lens and the subject to get the sharpest images possible of the selected focal point. These adjustments are always done in the manual focusing mode. Finally, there is a lot of variation in macro, so experiment. To me, anything that appears larger than real-life is macro. Have fun shooting!