Southern Illinois Photographic Society
www.sipscameraclub.com
August 2010 Newsletter

Calendar of Events

August
Meeting: Aug. 3
Program: History of Photography, Jillian Choate
15 Minutes of Fame: Linda Martin
Contest: Ravages of Time (1 year)
Outing: Centralia Balloon Festival, Aug. 21
Planning Meeting: Aug. 17

September
Meeting: Sept. 7
Program: TBD
15 Minutes of Fame: TBD
Contest: Still Life (60 day)
Outing: Du Quoin State Fair, Sept. 4
Planning Meeting: Sept. 21

October
Meeting: Oct. 5
Program: TBD
15 Minutes of Fame: TBD
Contest: Music (1 year)
Outing: TBD
Planning Meeting: Oct. 19

Inside...

Meeting news and Photo Op, in a brief summer issue

July Meeting

This month we welcomed our own Jan Sundberg to the podium to talk about her technique for creating invitation-sized cards in Photoshop.

The basic idea is to create a template that sets the right dimensions, into which you can insert the picture of your choice. With a 11"x17" layout, you can get 4 per page. The cards are folded in the middle, so she has separate templates for horizontal and vertical orientations. The fronts of the cards have a solid color fill, which serves a a background for the inset picture. Jan insets by 3/8" all the way around, except that on the edge with the fold she leaves 1/2", to leave room for the fold itself.

Printing specifics depend on the printer you're using. If you use the exact paper size, you'll need a printer that can get good results printing all the way to the edge ("borderless printing"). It may be more reliable to just use a larger paper size and/or trim manually. Printing DPI varies by printer; Jan gets good results on her Epson Stylus Pro at 260 DPI, while Canons and HPs are usually optimal at 300 (thanks to Dave Brewer for this tip). For paper, Jan likes Epson's Watercolor Paper Radiant White, size Super B 13x19 in.

For best results, the cards should be cut apart using a specialty cutter. Jan likes Dahle paper cutters. You can also try to go and use something at your local hobby shop.

Jan puts the cards in individual clear plastic stationary bags with an adhesive strip on the back. She gets them from clearbags.com. They sell a 5 7/8 x 4 1/2 bag at $5 for 100 count (look for product code B45).

Our member for 15 Minutes of Fame this month was Mike Hicks. He showed us some great pictures from his recent travels as well as his encounters with SIPS club members. I think we're learning to watch out when Mike is around with his camera....

Jim Bornert has just gotten back from a couple months touring the southwest states. He gave us just a tiny taste during Show and Tell; we're hoping to see more of this at a future meeting.

In announcements, Jim Osborn noted that the Carterville Rotary Club is rasing funds for Beverly's Wildlife Rescue facility. They are asking for donations of 8x12 Southern Illinois wildlife prints, to be raffled off. Also needed are people to help with selling tickets and distributing brochures. If you would like to help, contact Jim.

Our contest this month was "Insect World." We had quite a few entries. The winners were:
  1st place: Virginia Stith, "Just Landed"
  2nd place: Dave Horning, "The Fly"
  3rd place: a tie between Jim Osborn, "Wolf Spider with Babies," and Joe Hall, "Buzzing By."

For August, our contest is on "Ravages of Time." Fittingly for this topic, it has the longer 1 year timeframe.

Photo Op

by Jim Osborn
This is it!!...the LAST installment of technical know-how and and well-intended personal observations on the 10 categories in the 2010 Photographic Technical Excellence Contest!! To complete the discussion, I am going to cover both #9, "White or very light colored subjects," and #10, "Black or very dark colored objects," since they complement each other. I am going to try to make this simple, although I admit that handling these two photographic conditions correctly is still a challenge for me. To start with, you really need to understand how to manage exposure compensation on your camera. It is surprisingly simply, but I suggest you read your owner's manual for specific direction since each camera varies in how this is handled. For each, let's consider two scenarios. First, the primary lighting of the image is either predominantly white/light or predominantly black/dark. The second scenario will cover a smaller white object

Butterfly at Day outing (photo: Linda Bundren)

Day Outing

Our outing this month was to Richard and Susan Day's place in Alma, IL. We had a dozen members attend, collecting some great shots there.

Next month, our outing will be to the Centralia Balloon Festival, on Aug. 21.

Photo Op

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against a dark background and a dark object against a light colored background.

First, if you didn't already know it, your camera does not exactly translate white and black the way your eyes see it. Your camera wants to shift these extremes toward a more neutral "gray." Thus, a bright white field of snow will appear slightly gray rather than pure white, and black tones in an image will gravitate toward gray as well. The guidebooks suggest that white images need to be overexposed (+ exposure on your camera) to compensate for the graying (underexposure) and dark objects need to be underexposed (- exposure on your camera) to compensate for the lightening of the image toward gray (overexposed). The amount of exposure compensation needed varies with the image so it's a good idea to shoot several images at different exposure levels and decide what looks best to you. However, I admit that I don't usually make that adjustment with white/light subjects when I am shooting. My own experience is that when I try to increase exposure to an already light/bright subject I just "blow out" the image and lose important detail. The image may be whiter, but the detail is gone. Instead, I "underexpose" snow to keep the detail in the image and then try to adjust the brightness in Photoshop. That has worked well for me and I will probably keep doing it. Shooting primarily dark subjects is, essentially, the opposite of what I just said.

The second scenario is trickier because it involves significant variations in light between the main subject and the surroundings. Examples might be a white egret against a dark line of trees, or American Coots (dark-colored birds) against light-colored water. Remember from previous discussions that your camera can't see the range of light that you see with your eye? Problems result especially if you use evaluative (or zone) metering all the time. If you meter on the light colored subject the background will get darker. If you meter on the dark bird the background will get lighter. In my experience, even though I try to compensate I still tend to "blow out" the white egret and get no detail in the dark coot. Cameras generally have three types of metering capabilities: evaluative (zone), center-weighted, and spot. Generally, I have had more luck in getting the correct exposure on the main subject when I have switched to either center-weighted or spot metering. Since I acknowledge that I am no expert in these areas, you should do what I do—experiment, experiment, experiment.

One more tip—if your camera has a feature to "Display Highlights" and you engage it, you will find that the sections of your images that are overexposed will "blink" when viewed on your LCD screen. If you take an image, look at it on your LCD. If you see a lot of "blinkies," then try underexposing the image in 1/3 f-stop increments (again, refer to your owner's manual) until the blinkies disappear. This will help you judge exposure on those images that have considerable range in light. GOOD LUCK!!

Event and Programs

The SIPS Board is always looking for new ideas for meeting programs as well as outings. If you have an idea for a program you'd like to see or a place you'd like to go photograph with the group, please let us know, either by email or at a meeting.

Everyone is welcome to attend the SIPS Board meetings, where such ideas are discussed and assigned to the club calendar. The board meets the third Thursday of every month (except December) at 6:30pm, at Debby J's restaurant in Herrin, IL. It's on 14th St. between Cherry and Monroe, one block east of Route 148.