



Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com

July 2011 Newsletter

Calendar of Events

July

Meeting: Jul. 5

Program: Travel Photography
(Jonathan Springer)

15 Minutes of Fame: Lorraine
Highlander

Contest: Festivals *or* Take Me Out to
the Ball Game (1 year)

Outing: Richard and Susan Day
Alma, IL, Jul. 30

Planning Meeting: Jul. 19

August

Meeting: Aug. 2

Program: My Five Best Shots

15 Minutes of Fame: George Stone

Contest: Scavenger Hunt (60 day)

Outing: Classic Car Show

Planning Meeting: Aug. 16

September

Meeting: Sept. 2

Program: Creative Uses of
Photography (Karen Carlton)

15 Minutes of Fame: Jim Osborn

Contest: Trains, Planes, and
Automobiles (1 year)

Outing: Festival

Planning Meeting: Sept. 20

Inside...

News and articles from Jim Osborn
and Bill Thomas!

June Meeting

We had one new guest at our June meeting: Christina Fisher, of Marion. She was invited by Bill Thomas and Dana Tetzlaff, and plans to join us on a regular basis.

Our presentation for the evening was given by Dave Hammond, who explained his method for raw editing. He shared basics as well as some great shortcuts he has learned. He used his photos as examples and took us through opening in raw converter, adjusting exposure, etc then on to the editor for resizing, adding borders, and more. The group asked questions and shared their own experiences with raw converters.

George Stone was scheduled for the member's 15 minutes of fame, but due to technical difficulties he was not able to share his images with the club. He will be back in August to give his presentation.

We have some sad news to relate to the group this month: two of our members passed away recently. Dr. Charles "Chuck" Clemons, a longtime member, died on June 1 in St. Louis. In lieu of his presentation, George Stone was able to share some wonderful stories about his good friend Chuck Clemons, including travels and adventures to such places as the Grand Canyon and Lake Powell. Chuck was a collector of old cameras, and was technically astute and glad to share his knowledge with anyone that asked. Monroe Webb, also a longtime member, died on June 2 in St. Louis, at the age of 88. Monroe was a kind and interesting gentleman, full of good stories from a rich lifetime. Both he and his wife Louise have been a fixture at SIPS meetings, where they enjoyed the fellowship and built many friendships. Both Monroe and Chuck will be missed, and fondly remembered.

We also heard that Don McDonald was injured while photographing trains (one of his favorite pastimes). Although he fell and injured himself, he should have a full recovery. We wish Don a speedy recovery.

Dave Hammond currently has an exhibit at the University Museum at SIU-

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Photo Op

by Jim Osborn

I was reading an article in one of the photo magazines recently where the author stated that the single most important thing anyone can do to improve their photography is to use a tripod. That sounds incredibly simple but the underlying assumption is that most people don't use tripods. Now, if you are the kind of photographer that just wants to take pictures of your kids or grandkids with a point and shoot, I can understand; but if you are seriously into photography and you aren't using a tripod I think you need to ask yourself the question, "Why not?" I am probably guilty of under-using a tripod myself, and I have to ask myself "why." Certainly some of my excuses are just that, excuses. I find it easy to come up with rationalizations for not using my tripod. However, anyone truly serious about taking better pictures should rethink their rationalizations. See which of these you may have used:

- (1) It weighs too much
- (2) It is too large and bulky to carry around.
- (3) It takes too long to set up and take down between shots
- (4) It costs too much (so I don't own one)
- (5) I can't make the ball head work right
- (6) The ball head costs too much
- (7) I forget to put it in my car
- (8) I just don't think about it

All of these excuses have some elements of legitimacy. For example, even tripods made from light material such as carbon fiber weigh quite a bit and are very expensive. Tripods that can support the weight of a DSLR and a long lens need to have weight of their own. There is no quick fix here....and....even tripods that fold up into 4 sections take up space and can be awkward to carry around between shots—I hate the set up and take down. Most of all I hate to lug the tripod along as I walk

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SIPS members at the 2011 picnic at Ft. Massac State Park, June 25. (photo: Linda Bundren)

Meetings

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Carbondale. Entitled "Momentary Scyscrapers," it explores the grain elevators that dot the midwestern landscape. The exhibit runs from June 14 to August 5.

For show-and-tell, Jim Osborn showed us the Sun Sniper camera strap that he wrote about in last month's Photo Op. The web address for this is sunsnipersusa.com

The contest subject for this month was "Yellow." The winners were:

1st place: Bill Thomas, "Rose"

2nd place: Carol Sluzevich,
"Yellow Iris"

3rd place: Myers Walker,
"Chihuly Glass"

We had quite a strong field of entries, from Ruth Hilton, Mike Sanders, Teresa McIntosh, Dave Horning, Jim Osborn, Mike Hicks, Ray Brown, Carole Baker, Dana Tetzlaff, Karen Carlton, and George Stone.

Next month, owing to a mixup, we are accepting contest entries on two topics: "Festivals", and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." Select whichever you prefer; both have a 60 day timeframe. We also announced the SIPS Scavenger Hunt, which is the contest for August. For details, see the sidebar.

Photo Op

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between shots. With weight limits on your luggage that you check for air travel it is easy to justify leaving your tripod at home....and.....tripods and ball heads do cost a lot, but if you have the money to invest in a high quality body and/or lens, you should also budget for a higher quality tripod and ball head. After attending a NANPA regional photo event last year, I realized that the most important thing I was missing from my "tool kit" was a decent ball head. Over the years, I have owned several cheap ones, but none of them worked to my satisfaction. Finally I "bit the bullet" and bought an Acratech. I love it and am very happy that I finally "saw the light" (no pun intended). Perhaps, the poorest excuses are "I forget to take it with me" and "I just don't think about it." Using a tripod does take time and effort and it certainly can be a hassle, but whoever said that taking great photographs was going to be easy?

SIPS Picnic

The SIPS picnic was held on June 25 at Ft. Massac State Park, near Metropolis, IL. We had a good turnout (see Linda's photos), and the weather largely cooperated. If you missed seeing the Fort, you may get a second chance soon, as we are tentatively going back for the encampment on an outing in October.

Our next outing, however, will be to Daybreak Imagery, in Alma, IL, where Richard and Susan Day will host us on their terrific property. Check out daybreakimagery.com for information about the location, which they painstakingly maintain. There is a \$50 fee for this outing. In past years, there has also been a limit to the number of people, but this year they are lifting that restriction due to their good experience with SIPS.

In August we are looking at an outing to a classic car show. If you have thoughts on the best choice, feel free to chat with or send a note to someone on the board.

2011 SIPS Scavenger Hunt Contest

Contest entries are due August 2nd, and must include only photos taken after June 7, 2011. Submit one photo from each subject in an album or binder. Photos may be up to 5 x 7 in size. The 10 photos may be labeled with title only. The entry fee is \$5, open to SIPS members only. Entries will be reviewed and winners selected by an outside judge. The subjects are:

1. Hats
2. Graffiti
3. Rural Decay
4. Silverware
5. Tattoo(s)
6. From Above
7. Domestic Animal
8. Purple
9. Music
10. Church

USB

by Bill Thomas

It's always nice when we can learn from other's mistakes so I thought I would share this personal experience with the club.

I recently traveled to Big Bend National Park in far southwest Texas. Upon arriving at our room at the park lodge I turned my camera on to see that everything was in order. You can only imagine the surge of shock that I felt when I discovered that, for all intents and purposes, my camera was non-functional. None of the menus would display, none of the controls were functioning, I couldn't display pictures that had been previously taken. The only display was the 2 second display immediately after taking a picture. Yes, I could still take a picture but only in full manual mode - manual focus, manual exposure settings, and I had no idea if the pictures were even being saved to the camera's disk.

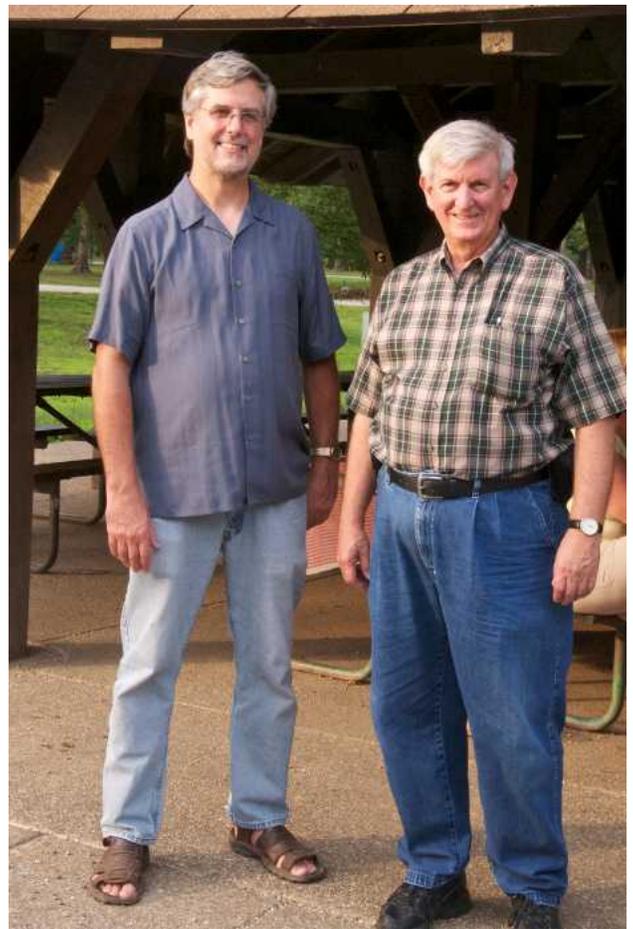
Well, after a momentary freak-out, and doomsday scenarios of having to buy a new camera body I decided I wasn't going to allow a 'gadget' to ruin my vacation. I realized that there is more to a vacation than looking through a viewfinder. I did continue to take photos and learned a lot about using the camera's manual functions, a good thing since now I realize I had been relying on its auto functions entirely too much. I learned to bracket exposures more and how to better interpret what I was seeing on the camera's display. The good news is, when I returned home from Big Bend I did have photos on the camera to download and the exposures were actually better than I normally get in the 'auto' mode.

So what was wrong with my camera? This is where I hope I can save someone some anxiety. It turns out that after downloading pictures from a camera (at least my model, a Sony Alpha DSLR. I suspect the same is true for others), if you don't close out the USB connection properly the camera can get stuck in USB mode thus disabling many of its functions.

Normally, after downloading, I would simply turn off the camera and unplug the USB cable from it. Until now that had worked fine. Until now. The proper method (for windows PC's) is to click on

the 'safely remove hardware' icon on the taskbar, wait until the camera displays 'USB disconnected' and/or the 'safe to remove hardware' message is displayed on the computer. Then turn off the camera and disconnect the USB cable from the camera. (Another option entirely is to simply remove the memory card from the camera and download the images using a card reader).

Fortunately, by reconnecting my camera to my computer, establishing a USB connection and then shutting down the connection properly I was able to restore my camera to it's original working condition. So, all's well that ends well and I learned several things along the way. Hopefully someone will learn from my experience and avoid some unnecessary grief. Live and learn!



SIPS members Bill Thomas and Bill Randell at the 2011 picnic at Ft. Massac State Park, June 25. (photo: Linda Bundren)