



Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com
April 2013 Newsletter

Calendar of Events

April

Meeting: Apr. 2

Program: iPhone Apps and
Accessories, Jim Osborn

15 Minutes of Fame: Bill Thomas

Contest: Someone You Don't Know
(1 year)

Outing: 4 Hours in the Life of
Anna/Jonesboro, Apr. 20

Planning Meeting: Apr. 16

May

Meeting: May 7

Program: Photos from Outing
15 Minutes of Fame: none

Contest: Cell phone or point-
and-shoot (60 day)

Outing: Indian Kitchen, May 11

Planning Meeting: May 21

June

Meeting: Jun. 4

Program: Archiving and Storage,
Jonathan Springer

15 Minutes of Fame: Jo Dodd

Contest: Rocks and Stones (1 year)
(unlimited postprocessing)

Outing: SIPS picnic

Planning Meeting: Jun. 18

Inside...

News and the latest from Jim
Osborn!

March Meeting

Our program for this month was wildlife and nature photographer Tom Ulrich. Tom has been a professional photographer for 38 years, with 16,000 photos published in a wide variety of major magazines. Tonight he discussed a subject he does not typically focus on: flowers.

Tom tends to organize flower pictures into five different categories:

A. Big expanse of flowers. These are typically fields of flowers that fill the frame.

B. Large bouquet or collection of flowers. This is a more manageable composition with a boundary.

C. 1, 3, or 5 flowers. Odd numbers are preferable to even (as with most subjects). Beyond 5, it starts to feel like category B.

D. Macro. By convention, macro is a 1-to-1 reproduction ratio, meaning 1 inch on the subject is represented by 1 inch on the imaging surface. You can find the reproduction ratio for any lens by simply taking a picture of a ruler and comparing with the size of your film or sensor. Tom typically uses a 105mm macro lens.

E. Submacro. Putting an extension tube between the macro lens and the camera body allows getting even closer. When getting below 1:1, the ordering of the numbers is reversed and it becomes a magnification ratio.

Tom showed many examples from his collection, and showed how well they worked in the various categories.

In category A, most of his shots used a wide-angle lens and fill the frame with flowers. Often, these shots included a single close-up flower as a counterpoint. Another point Tom made was to avoid distracting background features that detract from the overall effect.

In category B, he often uses an unusual perspective for extra interest; for example, shooting from overhead or from the ground. Many of the vertical shots use depth of field to good effect.

Tom's category C examples included

Tech Savvy

by Jim Osborn

The "eyes have it." In this installment of Tech Savvy I am going to give you a few pointers about shooting portraits, with tips about the eyes.

Portraiture is not necessarily my strong suit but a couple of the suggestions apply to wildlife as well.

First—try to get a "catch light." Catch lights are the little white reflections of sunlight or flash which appear in the eyes at certain angles. Catch lights give a little sparkle to the eye and also give the eye some definition. This is true for both people and animals. If you are shooting birds, the catch light is important because their small eyes may otherwise be camouflaged by their body coloring. When taking pictures of birds try to wait until the bird turns its head and the catch light is visible to you. With people, the catch lights provide a sparkle that adds interest and vitality to your portrait.

Second—when focusing on a person's face or on an animal, try to focus directly on a single eye. Most DSLRs give you the capability of selecting a single focal point. Generally, this cannot be done in automatic or program mode. If the subject is facing you squarely, it doesn't matter which eye you focus on, but if the subject's head is slightly turned, focus on the eye closest to you. If your goal is to achieve more than just a "head shot", you should still focus on the eye and then recompose your shot for the more encompassing image. To do that, focus on the eye, push the shutter button down halfway to "lock" the focal point, then with the shutter button still held halfway down recompose the image as you want it. Finally press the button down all the way to take the shot. Remember, whether you are shooting a person, a bird, a deer or a spider, if the eyes aren't sharp the rest doesn't matter.

Third—try to limit the amount of "white



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March Meeting

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mainly singles and groups of 3. Often a blurred background was used to add complementary color to the subject. Another technique he showed is to use a single flower that contrasts with a collection of others, for example by pointing in a different direction.

Tom illustrated category D with pictures of a morning glory backlit with natural light, making it look like a "white hole". Most shots center the flower and position the light above or behind.

In category E, the colors and composition flow together. Colors are softer and more complementary. Many of the subjects he showed were shot from ditches, woods, and other easy-to-reach places.

Our 15 Minutes of Fame featured Linda Bundren. She showed pictures of family, wildlife, flowers, and festivals. Examples included her grandson, the Ft. Massac encampment, Parke County (Ind.) covered bridges, St. Louis Busch Stadium, moose in Montana, wild turkey, pelicans, and snow geese.

For Show and Tell, Jim Osborn brought a few photos from the Orchid Show at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. He recommends that any who go try a macro lens and ring light. He also noted that they don't allow tripods or monopods, so plan accordingly.

Jim described our partnership with Crossroads Coffee in showing member photos. See the extended description of this elsewhere in this newsletter. In other announcements, we heard that B&L Photo in Carbondale is back in business with a new owner.

Our contest for this month was "Abstract." Unlike our normal contests, any sort of photo manipulation was allowed. (Approximately every third contest is planned to be unrestricted in this way.) The winners this month were:

1st place: Bob Dawes, "Circles"

2nd place: Mike Hicks, "Pigeon Village"

3rd place: Myers Walker, "Birds on a Tree"

Congratulations to all these! Next month, our contest is "Someone you Don't Know." This contest spans 1 year.

Tech Savvy

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eye" in the picture. By that, I mean limit the white non-iris part of the eye. If your subject is facing you but looking to the extreme right or left, you will pick up a lot more white in the eye than you want for your portrait. To achieve a balanced image, hold your hand out to the side (a distance of about 2-2½ feet) and ask the subject to focus on your hand. This will reduce the amount of eye white that appears in your image.

Fourth—if you are shooting a group shot or portrait that includes a person or people wearing glasses, it is very likely you will get a significant reflection from in their glasses if the person is facing directly toward you. Two strategies to limit the amount of reflection in glasses are (1) ask the person to turn their head slightly to one side or the other to avoid direct light reflection, and, (2) when using a flash, try to bounce the light off the ceiling to reduce shadows behind the subject(s) as well as reduce reflected light in glasses. A third strategy would be to avoid flash altogether and use natural light or strategically placed studio lighting. In the absence of artificial light, you will want to use a tripod to limit blur that can occur with longer exposures, or crank up the shutter speed to reduce blur if you are shooting hand-held. There are several ways to achieve faster shutter speeds when shooting "hand-held," but perhaps that's another article.

Get out there and practice photography—practice makes perfect!

Scavenger Hunt

A reminder, we have a yearlong "scavenger hunt" photo contest. The topics are:

1. Still Life
2. Through My Window
3. My Best Friend
4. 6 or 8-legged Creatures
5. Pond Life
6. Railroads
7. Curves
8. Abandoned Buildings
9. Shoes and Boots
10. Silhouettes

Contest entries are due at our meeting in November.

Crossroads Coffee Show

A reminder, Crossroads Coffee Co. in Carterville is graciously allowing us to use their cafe for displaying a club member's photos the first two weeks of each month. Each show consists of 10 prints, and the photographer must matte and frame each at 11x14. The club has frames and will rent them to the featured photographer for \$10 for the duration of the show, or of course the photographer can use his or her own materials. If photos are sold (note they need not be for sale), the photographer splits the revenue, giving 30% to Crossroads Coffee.

If you are interested in being a featured photographer at this venue, please see the signup sheet at our regular meeting or contact Jim Osborn. We are looking for someone for May currently, so now is the time to do it!

Photogenic Lighting For Sale

Complete Photogenic Brand studio lighting system for sale. It is model number AA01-A and complete with 4 large reflectors (2 each 400 watt lamps & 2 each 150 watt modeling lamps). Also includes 4 tripods, Flashmaster control system, 4 lamp bases, bulbs, all electrical cables and a large storage box. Has been tested and has very little usage on the system. Price is \$200. Email Jay Bussler at SuperRareFinds@frontier.com with any questions or call (618)559-5720.

April Outing

The concept behind our April excursion is to document a small town in Southern Illinois. Our outing leader, Karen Carlton, has selected the Anna/Jonesboro area, which we will visit within a four-hour period Sat. April 20. We will meet at the McDonalds there at 8am, then fan out.

The results of this excursion will form the program for the May meeting. Members will bring their photos for presentation and we will see one morning in Anna from many different perspectives.