



Southern Illinois Photographic Society

www.sipscameraclub.com

May 2014 Newsletter

Calendar of Events

May

Meeting: May 6

Program: Panoramas and Landscapes,
Mike Hicks

15 Minutes of Fame: Joanna Gray

Contest: Trees

Outing: CONWR, May 17

Planning Meeting: May 20

June

Meeting: Jun. 3

Program: Photo Printing Media

15 Minutes of Fame: Linda Bundren

Contest: Flowers (unltd. proc.)

Outing: SIPS picnic, Jun. 7

Planning Meeting: Jun. 17

July

Meeting: Jul. 1

Program: TBD

15 Minutes of Fame: Mike Hicks

Contest: Scavenger Hunt

Outing: Richard & Susan Day

Planning Meeting: Jul. 15

Inside...

All the news and the latest from Jim Osborn and Linda Bundren!

April Meeting

Our April meeting featured a panel discussion on the subject of what makes a good contest photo. The panelists were Tom Rabideau (TR), Myers Walker (MW), Jan Sundberg (JS), and Dave Hammond (DH). The format was interactive, and consisted of a series of questions posed by audience members to which the panelists offered responses.

Please note: the following transcript is written as a series of questions and responses for clarity, but is not direct quotation. Your editor apologizes for any misconstrued answers!

Q: How do you determine the image you'll enter in a show?

A: (DH) Look at your overall work versus the criteria of the contest (e.g. the rules), then narrow and edit things that might be "contest worthy". (MW) The SIPS contest is actually one of the hardest to win, because of the variety of topics. (JS) As a judge for the INDR photo contest in Outdoor Illinois, it was easy to eliminate some because basics were not followed in the entries. They looked for educational value to the viewer as well. (TR) In focus, well composed, good color, depth of field—the basics are the beginning for any contest. Figure out what the judges like! Make sure you match the theme with the photo and the title you use.

Q: Do you ever get too attached to a photo?

A: (DH) As a judge, I could always tell the emotional attachment.

Q: Is there a difference in the type of paper the photo is printed on?

A: (DH) Depends on the subject of the photo. (TR) For a formal show, the paper does not make a difference, but local shows may have more weight on the medium you use---canvas, metal, paper, etc. Use the internet to see what has won in years past, and look for the common thread of the winning photos.

Photo Op

by Jim Osborn

Ok, I'll admit it...the hard winter we endured was MY fault. In December I freely told everyone that I hoped we would have a cold enough winter that the Mississippi River would freeze. If that happened then I knew the eagles would congregate around open water. In January I got my wish and I got great pictures of eagles at Louisiana, Missouri, but I REALLY didn't mean for the cold to continue so long. So, for all of my photography friends who cursed the cold winter....SORRY!!

Now, with spring weather here I am hearing people talk about taking pictures of the birds that are migrating through the area. Dave Hammond told me he was able to photograph sandhill cranes at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge back in early March, and I know that the white pelicans have been through too. I am seeing posts on Facebook that people are putting up their hummingbird feeders and I saw my first prothonotary warbler of the season on a spring break trip to Mississippi in March.

I think I learned something about taking pictures of birds in flight this past year. While others may disagree with my strategy I am going to share it none-the-less. My big bugaboos in the past were always sharpness and contrast with the background. After much experimenting, this is what I do now. Knowing that, to take sharp pictures of birds in flight you have to have a very fast shutter speed. Here is my checklist:

1. Set camera to aperture priority
2. Set focus for center-weighted, single point
3. Set F-stop at the widest you can go. With a longer lens your widest aperture might only be 5.6 or 6.3, but go with that.
4. Adjust the ISO setting to 1600 (if you get digital noise, you can significantly reduce it in Photoshop or with a Photoshop plug-in)
5. If you have the ability to shoot



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Linda's Corner

by Linda Bundren

It's beginning to look like spring is here, with the sun shining, frogs croaking and the occasional tornado sirens screaming into the night. It is the ideal time to grab your camera and head for the outdoors. I enjoy it in spite of the occasional April shower and the lingering March winds. Jo Dodd, Jan Sundberg and I (plus Jim and Bob from Light and Lens) traversed the snake road at LaRue Pine Hills last week. The spring flowers are just beginning to raise their heads but the toads, frogs and snakes are spotted very infrequently. I just love being out in God's beautiful creation; although after a winter of little activity, five miles of hiking was rough on this ole gal.

Spring is the time for shooting macro. Macro is the art of shooting images that are not easily seen with the naked eye. For me that is spring flowers (even the inner sexual parts of some flowers), bees, insects, or any tiny subject. Shooting macro is much easier today with digital than it was in the days of film. Just being able to see what I am getting when I shoot is a big help and live view can also be a great help to capture the tiny images you see.

Just what do you need to shoot macro? If you do not have a dedicated macro lens (that shoots 1:1/1:10) you can add extension rings to a lens that you do have. An extension ring is a hollow extension tube that is attached between your camera body and your lens. Canon also makes a magnifying filter which screws onto the front of your lens. I have read about this filter but I have never seen or used one. And if you have extra money to invest in more photo equipment you can buy rails or bellows which allow you to make micro changes to the distance from the lens to the image as you are shooting. Rails are probably the best scenario because you can make minute changes as you focus. And of course, you will need a tripod.

A dedicated macro lens is the professional approach; however they are not cheap. They optimize the ability to get close to the subject. The macro lenses are less likely to have color fringing and distortion. Some of these lenses can compensate for the additional exposure time which is necessary when racking out

the lens to distances much closer than normal photography.

Macro photography requires the lens to be very close to the subject (much closer than normal photography). Almost all compact digital cameras have a macro setting. What could be easier than just dialing in a macro setting? This is easy but for the best macro photography, you need to be able to manage your lens aperture (f-stop) and shutter speed. With

the point and shoot you lose this capability when you dial in Macro. A small lens aperture means you will need more light, so you need to increase the time to get that perfect exposure.

Remember to get in close, use a tripod and shoot for the sharpest possible exposure. Have fun and bring some of your images into our May meeting for Show & Tell.

*Top to
Bottom:
Trout Lilies,
Dutchman's
Breeches,
Red Trillium*



*Photos:
Linda
Bundren*

Photo Op

cont'd from p. 1

images in rapid succession, set the camera to do that.

6. If you have imaging stabilizing capability on your lens, turn it OFF (it can slow down the capture of images) I have to admit that I have rarely been able to take decent shots of birds in flight using my tripod. So, if you are going to take handheld images and freeze movement with little blurring, the shutter speed has to be VERY fast. On my spring break trip to Mississippi, I took an eco-tour up the Pascagoula River. From a moving boat I photographed a juvenile Harrier Hawk in flight at 1/8000 second. That might be a little overkill, but I wanted to be sure I got the shot. Hummingbirds will require a fast shutter speed as well, unless you want some blurred motion of the wings in your shot. Finally, it goes without saying—the larger the bird the better chance you will have of capturing a decent image. Give it a try and let me know what you think. If you have other tips for shooting moving objects successfully, let me know—like you, I am still trying to improve my skills.

Announcements

The Pavilion in Marion will accept photos for display Sept. 15 to Dec. 15. There will be a reception in Sept. to kick it off.

There is a small cost for the reception and a fee for display. We will have a signup sheet for this at our next meeting, or contact Lu.

Our May member at Crossroads Coffee is Nancy Smolak, however they are doing some remodeling there, so please note that it may not actually be up this month.

Our next outing is to Crab Orchard National Wildlife Reserve on May 17. This "behind the scenes" event will start at Rocky Bluff at 8 a.m. Linda Bundren is leading.

Our June outing will be the annual SIPS Picnic, on the 7th. This year, we are heading to The Haven on Route 13 in Cartersville.

April Meeting

cont'd from p. 1

Q: What is the relative importance of "wow factor" vs. styles in shows?

A: Different ideas, larger size, and panoramas do well. Watch how it's matted and framed, to draw the eye to it. Double check rules to make sure it's ok to do, but try to make it stand out from the others.

Q: What are the areas you look for in a composition?

A: Focal point is clear. Background should enhance the subject. Do not enter more than one of the same thing in contests (but do so for editors). (MW) Eliminate everything in a photo that doesn't make it a good photo. There are lots of standard techniques such as the rule of thirds to apply to make it the best it can be. (Jim Bornert) Watch out for negative space (area around the subject) being too cluttered and distracting. Focus point(s), depending on the subject.

Q: When Shutterbug announces categories, do you go out and shoot for it or use what you have?

A: (MW) Use what I have already, if possible.

Q: Some thoughts on presentation?

A: (DH) Read the rules. Keep the presentation simple, with not too much matte color or frame draw, which can take away from the photo.

Q: Do you sign the matte or picture itself?

A: (DH) I sign on the white matte area on the edge of the photo normally, but also sign on the print. It depends on the rules of the contest.

Q: What size do you prefer?

A: (TR) I don't like anything smaller than 11x16, as I tend to be detail oriented and want it to be visible. It's often dictated by affordability though. (JS) Often dictated by the contest itself. (DH) I like 20x24 or 22x28. (TR) Don't use the wrong size matte with 8x10s, or fail to use a matte.

Q: What about online submissions?

A: (DH) Many contests now have online submissions, so be careful what they look like! The end result printed is not always the same. Find out if the judging is

electronic or by prints. (TR) Contests are often juried (sending all photos and info prior to actual judging), so find a mock bio and set of photos for a juried contest to look at so you can work out the details ahead of time.

Q: Have the rules eased on using Photoshop?

A: Depends on the contest—check the rules.

Q: Is the use of HDR considered Photoshop?

A: Depends on how far it is taken.

Our 15 Minutes of Fame slot was used for a swap meet this month. Items for sale included: (Dave Hammond) Complete Pentax 45 system with body, lenses, and extension tube, 2 film inserts and a bunch of film for \$750. Nikon F100 with motor drive, \$225. Canon Canonette, \$25. Nikon off-flash cord, \$15. Canon ring light for film camera, \$25. All-weather backpack, \$125. (Jo Dodd) Manfrotto pistol grip ball head for tripod, \$80.

For Show and Tell this month, Jim had some picture from Gulfport, MS, where he shot several water birds from a river boat. Bill Thomas showed shots of trillium and lichen from Wolf Lake, base of Pine Hills, and "inspiration point" views from atop Pine Hills. John Longmire showed photos from the bison roundup, with 350 to 400 bison being immunized and turned out to pasture.

Our contest for the month was "Historic and Antique." Our winners were:

1st place: Dave Hammond, "Thebes RR Bridge," and Jim Osborn, "Ft. Sumter" (tie)

3rd place: Myers Walker, "Ford 8N" Congratulations to these winners! Next month our contest is "Trees."