



Light & Shadow

CLUB CALENDAR

November

11/6 Jeff Fast

"Rocky" Part of Mineral Photography
*Refreshments by Brian Alpert
and Maryanne Burt*

11/20 Second Club Competition

Nancy Rupert, Howard Russ
and Roger Riley
*Refreshments by Milton Clark
and Vinnie Peppito*

December

12/4 Digital Workshop and Hi-Jinx

*Refreshments by Ray Eresman
and Jim Nanbu*

12/18 Holiday Banquet

Constantine's, Niantic

January

1/1 No Meeting**1/15 Third Club Competition**

Judges required
*Refreshments by Mark Eaton
and Ardie Harrison*

1/15 NECCC Nature Slide Competition Deadline**1/21 NECCC Color Slide Competition Deadline****TBD Sturbridge Village**

February

2/5 Dr. Peter Auster

"Imaging in the Deep Blue
Sea ... Science and Art"
*Refreshments by Larry Reitz
and Virginia Fisher*

2/10 NECCC Black & White Competition Deadline**2/19 Program Required**

*Refreshments by Bob Fedder
and Karen Fisher*

A hundredth of a second here, a hundredth of a second there—even if you put them end to end, they still only add up to one, two, perhaps there seconds, snatched from eternity.
—Robert Doisneau

FEATURE ARTICLES

Camera or Photographer?, by Karl Winkler

Although our club is the Southeastern Connecticut Camera Club (SECCC), our real purpose for meeting is more about photography than about cameras. Sometimes it is easy to forget how little the equipment matters, when we are bombarded by advertising in all the magazines about the greatest lens ever, the latest inkjet printer, or the digital camera with the most megapixels. All it takes to awaken to the inconsequence of the equipment is to look at photographs taken 100 years ago ... and marvel at how great they are, still today.

Along with this, a working knowledge of the basics of our craft will translate, no matter what equipment is used. Understanding the elements of composition, the finer points of exposure, depth of field, and point of focus are all vastly more important than if you have an f/1.4 lens instead of an f 1.8 lens. This is not to say that good or even great lenses, film, tripods, etc. don't make our lives easier and even make it possible to get "that shot" when lesser gear would have let us down. But at the same time, the best cameras in the world can't make a bad photograph into a good one. But skilled work in the darkroom often can!

So what does it take to become a better photographer? For each and every one of us, the answers to this question will differ. For me, I have a short list of things that I think make a difference:

1) Light is key. The first part is to recognize the light around you and what it really looks like, and how it is interacting with your intended scene. Portraits taken at mid-day with the subject looking into the sun usually don't turn out well. But often, a place with open shade nearby can provide the soft light to produce a wonderful photograph, flattering to the subject. Likewise, landscapes shot at mid-day usually don't have any depth, and sometimes the contrast of the scene is so great that your highlights are blown out and yet the shadows are pure black. Wait until late in the day, or get up early to capture a warmer, softer version of the same scene.

2) Exposure is absolutely critical. The best book I've found so far on this subject is Ansel Adams "The Negative". Although he spends a good portion of the book discussing special development methods and other approaches to the complete "Zone System", the main point of the book is to begin training your eye to see the

scene both as it is and also how you intend to have it in your photograph. The term for this is "visualization", and the goal is to understand how the end result will look before clicking the shutter. With practice, it becomes easier to do this, and exposure becomes a great ally in terms of getting the effect you desire for your images.

Common mistakes in exposure often revolve around how the meter "reads" a scene and how our eyes see it. Meters assume that whatever you are pointing at is something that you intend to be rendered as "middle gray" in terms of value, although you may be dealing with colors. For instance, you are trying to take a photograph of a white 1960 Thunderbird, but when you get the slides back, the car looks dingy and the whole image seems dark. The solution would have been to meter off of something that was closer to middle gray, such as asphalt, a lawn, or the clear north sky. Then, take the photograph. The result will be that the car looks "white" and the rest of your scene will be rendered more naturally. For those using cameras with only automatic exposure, hopefully you have an exposure compensation dial allowing you to adjust for difficult lighting situations.

3) Be critical of your work, and throw the bad stuff away. This also means of course that you should shoot more film to raise the odds that you'll get more good photos! Film is cheap, but great photos are a percentages game. Also, as you get more discerning of your work, the work itself will gradually improve. One thing I do is to "force" the number of photos from a roll that I'll let myself keep. For instance, on a 36-exposure roll, I'll keep only 20 slides. 16 have to be thrown away, so it makes me really decide what makes one picture better than the other. Then, after a year or so, I usually end up going through the photos again, and I do another edit. I've found that once I take a more objective view of my work, and forget about what was happening at the time I took these pictures, I'm more able to be discerning about which ones are good and which ones aren't. I ask myself "will I want to show this in a slide show?" or "will I want to look at this picture again in a year?"

4) Take risks. You can't do the same thing and

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Hummingbird Photography, by John Fast

I'm all set up and waiting. On this steamy July day within the meager shade granted by a blueberry bush, I hunker motionless over my lens resisting the urge to wipe the salt sting from my eyes for fear that I will prolong the wait for my quarry. The dog days of summer are not the best of times to be out photographing wild life and working outside of a blind demands only the most subtle of any necessary movements.

My mind drifts as I watch a swallowtail hopscotching from one blossom of a butterfly bush to the next. Its wings flutter excitedly as it discovers nectar among the lavender blossoms made sparse by the dry summer. The swallowtail clings upside down on a stalk as it sways in a welcome but short-lived breeze. Bumble bees move in fits and starts among the blossoms too, occasionally darting at one another to protect their turf. I slowly swing the long telephoto lens equipped with extender and extension tube towards the butterfly. The shallow depth of field creates an impressionist's view of the garden through my viewfinder as I search for the target. Pink and purple gladiola blooms, yellow black-eyed susans and white flox create a kaleidoscopic landscape from the small garden. I stop my pan when the yellow-hued suggestion of the butterfly looms into view. The vague shape dissolves into the swallowtail as I rack the focus ring on the lens. I release two quick shots before it flutters off to the next feeding site. The butterfly is not the subject I am waiting for but it may have provided a couple of good images. I muse that this

is a unique way to photograph butterflies, sitting twenty feet away with a telephoto lens instead of chasing them from flower to flower with a macro lens.

A loud buzz and simultaneous iridescent flash from the edge of my vision is quickly followed by another that breaks the reverie. As I turn my attention to the source, the two hummingbirds make several swinging arcs in the air and then soar one in pursuit of the other over the maples in the front yard and out of sight. I have learned from my attempts to photograph these little creatures that they are very aggressive about defending their feeding ground from each other. There are times that I sit for long stretches to await an opportunity to photograph one only to have it broken up in this manner.

There are only two species of these smallest of birds indigenous to the northeast, the ruby-throated hummingbird (*archilochous colubris*) and the rufous hummingbird (*selasphorus*). Their wings move so rapidly they create an unmistakable humming sound that can be astonishingly loud. It is this wing movement that allows them to hover and to move in any direction without "heading" in that direction. A recent encounter illustrated that behavior. The garden plantings are sufficient to attract the hummingbirds but I "salt" the garden with a small feeder to further encourage them. While in the garden replacing the "nectar" in the feeder, a hummingbird suddenly was hovering within three feet of my face looking me squarely in the eye. I froze to see what it



would do. It appeared not to be alarmed but, if anything, was curious. It suddenly shifted vantage point a foot to the left without taking its eyes of me, hovered there and then shifted laterally to the right several feet., then curiosity satisfied, it left in high gear. Of course the camera was back at my seating place!

I have tried on and off during the summer to capture these interesting little targets on film. The challenges are great especially trying to do so without the use of a strobe to freeze their rapid movements. The use of a long lens (even though fast) coupled with an extender and ASA 100 slide film doubles the challenge. Although I have yet to get the image I am after I do have several that may be acceptable as record shots. Not getting the image I want is a disappointment but the hours spent observing the garden images and the activities of it's residents and visitors provided rewards of their own and I know the hummingbirds will be back next year to entice me into the yard for another attempt at that winning photograph.

Camera or Photographer?, by Karl Winkler

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expect different results. If you are comfortable with landscape photography, then try some portraits (with a patient subject!) If you normally prefer macro work, try candid street shots. Break out of your rut and push yourself to experience a new side to the craft. What you learn will translate into your more "standard" work.

5) Keep a camera with you, loaded with film (or batteries, or both!) at all times. Even if it's just a point and shoot. I keep a small manual camera with me so that I can set the meter easily and get the correct exposure despite the lighting conditions (see #2). Although I may go days or weeks without getting a decent photo or perhaps any photos at all, I'm often rewarded with a strange scene, or amazing light, or a dramatic sunset, or some funny people, etc. One day I was driving to work and a family of ducks was crossing the road on Route. 85. Traffic in both directions was stopped, waiting for mommy & daddy duck, and six little ducklings to waddle across the road. I didn't have my camera... and I vowed at that moment to NEVER be without one again. Would it

have been a good photograph? Maybe not. But now I'll never know...

6) Simplify your compositions. The one thing that bugs me more than anything else about my own work is when I see a distraction in the photograph that I had not noticed when taking the picture. A tree branch, power line, top of house cut off, telephone pole sticking out of someone's head, etc. And I'd guess that you suffer from this problem as well. And although Photoshop or other image editing programs makes it relatively easy to remove some of these problems, the best solution is to learn how to watch for them when taking the picture.

Taking this idea one step further, it's important to recognize that our eyes see things that the camera does not, and visa versa. To put it simply, cameras do not have brains that help them sort out the scene and decide what is important. Thus, to get pictures that look like we want them to, we have to learn to see the way the camera does.

7) Show your work in a community form and therefore be open to criticism. By allowing

other photographers and/or artists to see your work and provide you with constructive criticism, you will begin to see things in new ways. Perhaps you had not noticed a green shift in one of your prints. Or perhaps you had not noticed how distracting a blown highlight was in a particular slide. Other, more objective parties may pick these things up right away and let you know. Thus, you can tune your eyes with the experience of more than just yourself. In a similar way, it is important to see the work of others so that you can also view how your colleagues visualize the world. Undoubtedly, you will get new ideas and learn new techniques by seeing what else can be done, rather than just trying to hone your own ideas.

All in all, the best answer relates to #3: take lots of pictures. Make dates with yourself to go out and work on your craft. If you see a scene that looks interesting, make a mental note to come back and shoot some film on a day when there's a few free hours to do so. And in advance, think about the light, and the possible points of view that might work. But at the same time, keep your mind open for experiments, take risks, and don't forget to have fun.

DIGITAL CORNER

Adobe Photoshop 7.0 User Review, by John Fast

Version 7.0 of Adobe's flagship imaging Photoshop software contains several new features of special interest to photographers. In the last issue of Light & Shadow I discussed the new file browser and healing brush tool, but there is more!

This new version of Photoshop includes a greatly enhanced version of the picture package option. While version 6.0 allowed you to automatically make picture packages, your choices were very limited. Photoshop 7.0 includes many picture package templates allowing you to print images of various standard sizes and from various sources on a single sheet of paper. Options also allow custom labeling of the images with copyright, file name, title, caption, credits or custom text.

Creating web site photo galleries is a snap using Photoshop's automate web gallery option. Photoshop provides several templates to allow a variety of gallery formats. The image sizes and jpeg compression are all customizable. In addition, you can automatically add file names, captions, credits, title and copyright notices. Creating the page is as easy as specifying file locations for your images, a destination and then choosing among the various template options. Look for the use of this feature on future updates of the club's web site.

PROGRAMS

November 6th program.

Jeff Fast is a mineral collector and dealer. He has made 9 trips to the Russian far east and over a dozen to Mexico in search of minerals. Currently, he is trying to set up a web site to sell minerals. His talk will focus on the travel and photo opportunities in central Mexico, followed by a discussion on the particular difficulties of photographing minerals. For those who are interested, he will also bring a small selection of some of the minerals he has found in Connecticut

February 5th program.

Dr. Peter Auster is the Science Director at the University of Connecticut's National Undersea Research Center. His academic interest is focused on the ecology of marine fishes. He has spent his career using scuba, research submersibles and remote controlled underwater vehicles to study marine life from shallow seas to the deep ocean. Photography has played an important role in his scientific studies as well as providing a way to share his unique views of the underwater landscape. He will discuss the technological challenges of creating images in the ocean and share some unique views on the status of the seas.

PHOTO TIPS

Black Cat Photography Rules-of-Thumb, part 2

Rules-of-thumb are a kind of tool. They help identify a problem or situation. They are easy to remember guides that fall somewhere between a mathematical formula and a shot in the dark. We have formatted them to fit on 3x5 index cards. Cut them out, glue them to 3x5 index cards, and laminate them if you desire. Keep them in your camera bag for quick reference. Look for more Rules-of-thumb cards in the

coming newsletters.

Provided by Black Cat Photo Products the manufacturer of the Original Black Cat Red-Eye Pen, Aqua-Dot red-eye pen, Digi-Dot red-eye pen, SteadiStrap, Archiva Classic (dye-free) film and the Black Cat Extended Range Exposure Guide.

<http://www.blackcatphotoproducts.com/>

Photographic Gray Card

When the camera meters a mid-tone the scene will be properly exposed.

Palm Reading

To select an average tone exposure reading, "read" the palm of your hand with your thumb extended. Then, using your thumb up reminder, open up your aperture (smaller number) one stop.

Bracketing

Expose for a mid-tone then adjust exposure to +1 and -1. For extreme lighting go one exposure step more each way.

Better Exposures

If you are using negative film and can't take several exposures, overexpose the metered value by one stop. You will have a better chance of recording your information.

Doubt

When in doubt open your aperture one stop. When in serious doubt open two stops.

Filters

When using an 80A blue (outdoor to indoor) filter, open 2 stops when using a hand-held exposure meter.

Flash Fill

For flash use outdoors, place the ISO setting for the film you are using on your camera meter. Double this number and place it on the flash ISO dial. Meter the scene with the camera and select an f-stop. Match this f-stop requirement with the automatic flash color mode controls. Shadows will be filled with flash lighting and appear one stop darker than the fully illuminated subject.

More Light

When you want to add light to make your final print or slide look lighter, use the following rule: WHEN YOU WANT MORE SUN MOVE TOWARDS ONE. This rule applies to the camera numbers that affect the aperture, shutter speed, and film speed.

Sunny 16

On a bright sunny day, set your aperture on 16 and your shutter speed as close as possible to your films ISO rating. This will produce properly exposed pictures with all films and all film speed ratings.

Blue Sky

A clear north blue sky is a middle tone. An exposure reading using the blue sky as a source will produce a proper daylight exposure.

Taking Pictures into the Sun

When back-lighting is apparent, open the aperture an extra one and a half stops.

Sunsets

Meter the area of sky directly above sun and use this setting as the basis for exposure. Using one f-stop less light will produce the effect of a picture take none half hour later.

Full Mooney 11

For proper exposure of a full moon, set your aperture on 11 and your shutter speed as close to your films ISO rating as possible.

Half Mooney 8

Use the above rule for shutter speed and use an aperture of 8 for pictures of a half moon.

COMPETITION RESULTS

September 18th Club Competition, by Mark Eaton

The club competitors are off to their best start since I have been keeping track of points. We had 90 entries from 17 people competing in our five regular classes, plus one entry in the alternative class.

Judges were Ted and Arrel Appel from "CAP" and Amy Crocker from Willimantic Camera. Ted and Arrel reviewed the award-winning photos and made many favorable comments, with a few suggestions to improve the images.

Slide First Place Winner

"Dunes At Cape" by Maria Hetzel

Color Prints A First Place Winner

"Stormy Weather" by Larry Reitz

Color Prints B First Place Winner

"Desert View—Grand Canyon"
by Ray Eresman

Digital First Place Winner

"Harkness Gardens #1" by Bob Wilkinson

Black & White First Place Winner

"African Violet and Bud" by Jo Joseph

Alternative First Place Winner

"Peek-A-Boo" by John Hanrahan

Three of last year's class winners; Larry Reitz (Color A), Ray Eresman (Color B), and Bob Wilkinson (Digital Prints) are off to a good start and are in the lead in defending their titles. Karl Winkler is presently leading in both Slides and Black & White Prints, displacing John Fast and Mark Eaton, respectively.

Special Awards—A new addition to our Annual Banquet

We are going to add two new annual awards this year.

The first is to award consistent, quality work in any one category. This award will be given to the competitor who has the highest average of all pictures entered in that category. A minimum of eight entries (and a maximum of 16) will be considered.

The second award is designed to encourage and reward diversity as well as experimentation. It will go to the competitor who scores the most points (that count towards annual awards) in all regular classes combined.

Stay tuned for more info on this.

A Bright Flash of Thanks

I wish to thank all of the fine people who helped me organize the entries and handle the prints for judging: Wilkie, Ray, Larry, Vinnie, and the many others who have helped at times with the prints. Plus John and Bob with slides. Bob also does double duty faithfully every competition night by recording all of the judges' scores. Anybody whose name I have inadvertently left out is free to flog me at the next meeting ... J

It is impossible for me to do this alone. The prints start coming in fast and furious, as everyone tries to make the entry deadline of 7:00p.m. (HINT, HINT!). I start about 6:30, so first come, first served—So please bring your prints early!

*"I am not interested in shooting new things—I am interested to see things new."
—Ernest Haas*

Regular Meetings

The club meets the first and third Wednesday of each month for September through May. Meetings start at 7:15 p.m. at the Waterford Municipal Complex on Route 85, one mile north of the Crystal Mall.

Club Officers

President	John Fast	860-235-9188
	jfast@earthlink.net	
Vice President	Larry Reitz	860-859-2886
Treasurer	Vinnie Peppito	860-739-8812
Secretary	Virginia Fisher	860-442-8246
NECC Rep	Bob Fedder	860-885-1181
CAPS Rep	Vinnie Peppito	860-739-8812

Club Web Site

www.home.earthlink.net/~jfast/

Newsletter Editors

Cathy Downie	cathydownie@worldnet.att.net
Reneé McNamara	drhetzel@earthlink.net

PHOTO OPS

15th Annual Fall Bird Walks

Shore and song birds, hawks, falcons and owls can all be seen at a premier birding spot. Hammonasset State Park. Saturdays only, September 7, 2002-November 23, 2002, 8:00am-10:30am
Admission is \$4.00
203-245-9056

8th Annual UI/Energy Star Fantasy of Lights

A drive through event of enormous holiday light displays. Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven. Monday-Wednesday, November 22, 2002-January 6, 2002, 5:00pm-10:00pm
\$5.00 Car or van with 6 or less people
\$10.00 Car or van with 6 or more people
Thursday-Saturday, \$10.00 per car or van

4th Annual Holiday Lights Fantasia

Drive through lights exhibit. Goodwin Park, Hartford. November 27, 2002-January 5, 2003, Sunday-Thursday 5:00pm-10:00pm
Friday-Saturday 5:00pm-11:00pm
\$10 per car or van
www.holidaylightfantasia.com

La Salette Festival of Lights

Over 100,000 lights decorate trees and buildings. La Salette Shrine, Attleboro, MA. November 28, 2002-January 1, 2003, 5:00pm-9:00pm
Admission and parking are free.

Trees in the Rigging

Steamboat Dock, Essex
4:30pm—Lantern light carol sing
5:30pm—Parade of lighted ships
6:00pm—Arrival of Santa by boat
Monday, December 1, 2002
Admission is free

Norwich Winterfest

Parade with floats, fife and drums corps, bands and clowns. Starts at Chelsea parade grounds through downtown. Sunday, December 8, 2002, 1:00pm
Admission is free

Niantic Christmas Light Parade

Parade of custom floats covered with lights. Main Street, Niantic. Sunday, December 8, 2002
Admission is free.

Saybrook Christmas Torch Light Parade

Community carol sing and muster. 40 plus fife and drum corps, floats, antique cars and fire trucks. Saturday, December 14, 2002, 6:00pm
Admission is free.

LECTURES

Preserving Your Family's Photographic History

Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center.
Thursday, November 21, 2002, 2:00pm
Admission is free
www.mashantucket.com

Newsletter

We welcome club member contributions to the club newsletter. We will try to include all submissions to the newsletter, space allowing. Please email to Cathy Downie at cathydownie@worldnet.att.net and Reneé McNamara at drhetzel@earthlink.net. If you don't have email, submissions may be dropped off at Davidson's Photo.

Deadlines for submissions to the newsletter are as follows:

January/February/March 12/18
April/May 3/19