

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

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Club Meetings and Other Bits of Information

The **Camera Club of Central Minnesota** has decided to meet on different days in order to provide access to our meetings for more people. We will be alternating between a Thursday of one month and a Monday of the following month at the Public Library in St. Cloud from 6:45 to 8:45 pm.

The club has monthly photo topics, image sharing and critique, hands on demonstrations of photographic gear and software, member online gallery links, discussions about photography, and is open to all. The monthly topics for the next few months are:

January 7, Thursday, Mississippi Room

February 8, Monday, Mississippi Room

Winter Photography

Winter photography, especially when snow is involved, comes with some pretty tough challenges. All that white snow with the beautiful blue sky makes a camera go mad trying to figure out the correct exposure. If you're the type of photographer who prefers to shoot in auto or program mode most of the time, you'll find it difficult to nail the exposure. This is a good time to switch over to manual mode.

1. Exposure

The most difficult thing when shooting in the snow is nailing the exposure. If the opening paragraph had you thinking "what exposure should I use then?" here's the answer: always shoot at least one stop over what the camera tells you is the right exposure. Use the exposure compensation button or the meter and then switch to manual and tweak the exposure so that the meter indicates that you are one stop over exposed. Why? With all that white snow, your camera will be fooled into thinking that the scene is too bright and thus under-expose to make it 18% grey (or middle grey). That will make the scene too dark. Over-exposing compensates for this "flaw."

But, always take some test shots to check that you are in the zone.

2. Shoot with the sun behind you

This is one time when it's okay to shoot with the sun behind you. If you're shooting into the sun, when it is closer to the horizon, you'll have problems nailing the exposure. You want to use the sun like a flash.

3. Go wide

Use a wider lens and get close to the action. Wide angle lenses tend to make things larger than life, which is what you want if you're shooting snowboarders and skiers. I suggest the 16–35mm or even the 17–40mm for best results.

4. Crop tight and zoom

When composing, try zooming in and cropping tight. Fill out the space with the subject but leave some space in the direction that the skater or snowboarder is moving. This creates a sense of movement which is what most sport and action photographers look to achieve in their images.

5. Pack extra batteries

Cold weather drains power from camera batteries much faster than mild weather. Always ensure that the batteries are fully charged and pack extra batteries if you plan to shoot for extended periods of time.

Stolen Photography Gear

The anti-theft gear registry LensTag just provided us with this new look at how camera gear was stolen over the past year. As you can see from the pie chart below, car and home break ins are still the biggest way thieves are targeting cameras and lenses: they accounted for over half of all thefts reported to LensTag in 2015.

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The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

You Know You're a Photographer When...



Being a photographer is more than just a hobby or a career choice—it's life. Something you feel you literally could not live without. Every instant of your waking moment, you feel the dire need to pull your camera out and take a picture of the beauty of your surroundings. Sound familiar? I have compiled a list of eight ways you know when you're a photographer.

You get upset when you don't have your camera on you.

I feel as though every photographer knows this feeling. For instance, maybe you decide to go for a walk down to the beach and accidentally leave your camera sitting on the kitchen bench. When you go to take a picture, your heart drops. And the only reason you don't know you're missing your camera until you get to the beach is because you're so used to it being in your hands; it's almost second nature. Your body has adapted to your photography addiction, and it doesn't recognize when something is drastically wrong. Am I right?

Lighting > Equipment

At some stage in a photographer's life, there comes a point when having the best equipment just doesn't cut it. You begin to realize that there's more to a good photo than the equipment (although it's still one of my many pleasures) You realize that the lighting of the pho-

tograph is the important part. Unfortunately, there is (arguably) no tool that can give you perfect lighting other than taking a photo at the right time, at the right angle, and using the lighting of the situation to your advantage.

You can make crap look good.

Okay, so this one might be stretching it, if we're taking the point literally. I mean, maybe you can turn a piece of dog poo into art, but that's not entirely the point I'm trying to make. Basically, as a photographer, you see potential photographs that most people couldn't imagine being a photograph. Maybe it's a picture of a trash can or a brick wall — whatever it is, you begin to think outside the box; you begin to take pictures, and you develop a sense of what makes good photographs, regardless of what other people may think.

Your camera battery runs out before any other gadget.

Photographers are known best for having their cameras with them at all times. Regardless of the event, the camera will be glued to the photographer's hand for that perfect moment to take a quick photo. However, this comes with negative repercussions. The camera batteries do not last a lifetime. Unfortunately, photographers must face the constant annoyance of having their camera battery die before their phone battery. For most "normal" people, this is sim-

ly unfathomable. For photographers, this is the harsh reality of being addicted to using a camera.

You think the sound of a camera shutter is pleasurable.

There is nothing I love more than the sound of a camera shutter. It's like music to my ears, and I know many people who can relate. For some, the sound of birds is pleasurable; for others, it's math equations (is that even a thing?). But for photographers, it's the sound of the camera shutter—knowing that a high quality photograph will be a result of the shutter.

You get annoyed at people who buy top-of-the-line cameras only to take selfies.

When you take photography seriously, just like any other form of art, nothing is worse than people who purchase the latest and the greatest cameras only to take photos of themselves. Okay, in some cases, it can be a justified purchase. Maybe you're a model? But if you're uploading it to Facebook for only your friends and family to see, then maybe you can understand why photographers get irritated. You see, photographers (in most cases) very rarely take photos of themselves. Instead, they're exploring the beauty of the world around them too much to worry about themselves.

PHOTOGRAPHERS
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You are offended when someone makes a harsh comment about your camera.

“Your camera looks too big,” for example, is just unnecessary criticism. What do you want me to do about the size of my camera? Do you think I didn’t notice? People don’t seem to understand that if you insult the camera, then you might as well insult the camera owner. At least we then have a reason to get offended, right? I mean, how would you feel if someone came up to you and said you had a big nose? Is that more

of a justified reason to act offended? If you’re a photographer, then the answer is no.

Traveling is more about photography than it is relaxing.

Finally, we have come to my favorite point of all: traveling. For most people, traveling is more about relaxing — building strong memories to last a lifetime. Photographers want much more than that. We want to be reminded of our traveling experiences with physical memories — photographs of our experienc-

es. Why have a slice of cake when you can have the whole thing? That’s not to say that photographers don’t know how to relax, but we would rather capture the surroundings of the location than waste our time sleeping on the beach.

If you can relate to these, then maybe you’re more of a photographer than you thought! Hats off to you—let’s hope there are more of us out there.



Getting Sharp, Infocus Photographs

Is there anything that can’t be fixed in post? Thanks to the brilliance of Lightroom, Photoshop, and other similar applications, one could easily surmise that the answer to that question is a resounding no. Crooked horizons, over/under-exposure, excessive noise — all relatively easy to remedy. You can even remove the people cluttering up your shot of a famous landmark or swap out one sky for another. The list of manipulations that can be made with software is extensive, but there are certain things that simply can’t be compensated for in post-processing. Among those things are blurry images. I don’t mean shots that require a bit of sharpening, I mean shots where it’s painfully obvious that you missed focus.

Out of focus shots are frustrating. Even worse, there’s no software out there that can take an unfocused image and put it in focus. When you

miss, you miss. So it’s better not to miss. Here are some things you can do to help ensure you get sharp, in-focus shots every time.

Motion vs. No Motion

Is your subject stationary or is it moving? The answer to this will greatly affect how you go about capturing the image.

If your subject is stationary you’re not likely to run into too much trouble. Perhaps the simplest way to deal with things is to set your camera to single AF mode and, if necessary, move the focus point to the place on your subject where sharpness is most important. There are times, however, when your camera’s AF system isn’t up to the task, such as when shooting in very low light conditions or when the subject exhibits a lack of contrast (a cloudless blue sky or a solid color wall, for instance). In such cases, if

you were to leave it up to the camera, it would just continue to hunt for focus. Should the camera ever lock on to something, it almost certainly won’t be in focus.

Situations like this call for you to take things into your own hands and switch to manual focus. By focusing manually, you are not at the mercy of the limitations of your camera’s AF system. Just know that if your manually focused shots are out of focus, you can’t blame camera.

If your subject is in motion — a bird in flight, your child running in the park, cars racing along the highway — you will want to set your camera to continuous focus mode (different camera makers may use different terminology: AI Servo for Canon, AF-C for Nikon and Sony, C-AF for Olympus — consult your manual if you need to). This focusing mode keeps a subject in sharp focus as you track it

**OUT OF FOCUS
SHOTS ARE
FRUSTRATING**



The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Getting Sharp Infocus Photographs (continued)



THE FACT REMAINS THAT A TRIPOD IS YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE SOURCE OF STABILIZING YOUR CAMERA.



with your camera. Once you depress the shutter button half way, the camera will lock on to the subject and continue to adjust focus as the subject moves so that once you fully press the shutter button to take the shot, odds are you will have a sharp blur-free image.

Check Your Shutter Speed

One culprit of out of focus/blurry images is camera shake. And the main culprit of camera shake is inadequate shutter speed. By using a fast enough shutter speed, you mitigate the effects of camera shake, thus dramatically increasing the probability of a properly focused shot. So how fast is fast enough? That depends. A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is the “reciprocal rule.”

For example, if you are using a 100mm lens, your shutter speed should be at least 1/100th of a second. If you’re using a zoom lens set to 250mm, set your shutter speed to 1/250th of second or faster. There is an important caveat to consider, though. This specific implementation of the reciprocal rule applies only to full frame cameras.

In order to adapt the reciprocal rule to crop sensor cameras (APS-C, micro 4/3rds, APS-H, etc.), you have to account for the camera’s crop factor by multiplying the crop factor by the lens focal length. If, for instance, you are using a focal length of 100mm on a camera with a crop factor of 1.5x (commonly used by Nikon, Sony, Samsung, and Fujifilm APS-C cameras) you will need to set a minimum shutter speed of 1/160th of a second ($100 \times 1.5 = 150$, but you won’t find 1/150th on your camera, so go up to 1/160th). The rule isn’t totally fool-proof, and it’s a good idea to err on the side of speed; if, by applying the reciprocal rule, you determine you need a shutter speed of 1/80th of a second, go ahead and shoot at 1/100th of a second unless, of course, that means you will underexpose the shot.

Image stabilization, whether in-lens or in-camera, is an increasingly common feature and can work wonders in terms of allowing you to achieve sharp images while hand holding your camera at relatively low shutter speeds. Image stabilization, however, does not freeze moving subjects and should

typically be disabled when using a tripod.

Increase ISO

Don’t fear high ISO levels. I can almost guarantee that you will one day find yourself in a situation where the only way to get a substantially fast shutter speed is to bump up ISO. Just do it. Many cameras will perform just fine up to ISO 3200. You will be happy you got the shot and you can always apply noise reduction on the image during post-processing.

Use a Tripod

Some photographers don’t want to even think about having to carry around a tripod (I know because I’m one of them), but the fact remains that a tripod is your most effective source of stabilizing your camera. With a good tripod, you don’t worry about camera shake, which means you can safely shoot at slower shutter speeds, which means you can keep your ISO lower, all the while getting crisp, properly focused shots. And not only are there sturdy, lightweight tripods available, there are numerous tripod “alternatives” out there such as monopods and mini/flexible tripods.

The Basics of Night Photography

Night photography has become very popular in recent years, as digital cameras have continued to improve. Photographers can now capture stunning images of the night sky with relatively inexpensive equipment. It does,

however, require a lot of expertise to capture these images, as the rules of photography are often turned on their head.

I’ve outlined some of the basics of night photography

below.

Equipment

When shooting at night, it helps to have a newer digital camera that is rated well for low-light ISO performance. It’s also preferable to use a

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lens with a very wide aperture that can let in a lot of light.

Planning Your Shots

If you take the time to plan when it will be best to photograph at a particular location at night, you will almost always get results that are superior to an unplanned shoot. One of my favorite software programs for planning night shots is called Stellarium. It shows exactly how the night sky will appear from any location around the world at any date and time you choose. This program can be downloaded for free at <http://www.stellarium.org/>. It can also be purchased as an iTunes or Android app.

Stellarium is especially useful for previsualizing the Milky Way. The Milky Way is one of the most dramatic objects to photograph in the sky, and its location changes constantly throughout the night and throughout the year. By check-

ing Stellarium to see where the Milky Way will be in the sky, you can plan for it to be over a specific object, like a rock formation or a mountain.

Camera Settings

When shooting at night, you'll usually want to use the widest aperture on your lens, such as f2.8. You can calculate your exposure time using the rule of 500. Simply take 500 divided by the focal length of your lens to get the number of seconds to expose the shot. For example, if you shoot with a 20mm lens, take $500/20 = 25$ seconds. I recommend using the highest native ISO on your camera that doesn't cause any highlights to be blown out (a native ISO is one represented only by numbers, not by any letters, such as H1 or H2).

Focusing

Focusing can be a challenge

at night. The easiest way to get a night shot in focus is to set your camera up during the day and get your focus right before it ever gets dark. However, if you can't do this or you need to change your focus during the course of the night, there are many ways to do this, including autofocusing on the moon or autofocusing on a flashlight that you place at a set distance. Regardless of how you focus, it is very important to always zoom in all the way on the image on your LCD screen after you take the shot to ensure that everything is in sharp focus.

While taking photos at night can be challenging, the most important thing is to shoot as much as possible and constantly experiment with new techniques. With a little practice, capturing a great shot in the dark will be more than just a shot in the dark!



IF YOU KNOW A CHILD THAT COMMONLY POSES EVERY TIME YOU GET OUT THE CAMERA, YOU WILL NEED TO HIDE IT INDEFINITELY.

Getting Some Good Children Photos

You try and try to get that perfect shot. If only they'd stay still, if only they'd smile... if only they'd look at the camera! So many useful things could have been done in this time, but ugh, you can't go without pictures. Here are some helpful tips to get through these blunders.

The Poser

Candid shots are always great. They capture the moment, find hidden smiles, and bring you back to the moment whenever you see the photo. You immediately remember where you were and what was happening with candid shots, because they are liter-

ally that moment in time. Opposed to one of a thousand fake, Cheeeeeeeees! smiles with no distinguishing features to know what day and time the photo was taken save the background featuring a "Happy Birthday" sign.

To get this effect, you must hide your camera. If you know a child that commonly poses every time you get out the camera, you will need to hide it indefinitely. Some kids are so on auto pilot that they don't realize that they're posing. If you really want to get a genuine grin or look of surprise, keep

your camera tucked underneath your hand, arm, or any place you can keep it hidden. In addition, have your camera on with all of the correct settings to get that picture at a moment's notice.

Lack of Focus

With babies, it does not matter much about candid shots. Their deal is that they never look at the camera and/or they cry. This trick solves both the baby not looking and the baby who is crying. How many group photos have you taken where everyone is smiling except Junior? The trick with babies is to first find something that makes them





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Membership is \$25 per year. Members should provide: Email Address, Mailing Address, and Phone Number.

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The Camera Club of Central Minnesota publishes a monthly newsletter which is distributed via e-mail. The newsletter will contain information about up-coming meetings, summaries of previous meeting, recommendations for photographers, announcements of photographic workshops, and other material that seems appropriate.

If you would like to send suggestions, comments, or other communications concerning the club or newsletter, please send your e-mail to rheath@tds.net.

Getting Some Good Children Photos continued

smile. Different babies like different things. Rattles usually do the trick or find something with lights and/or are shiny.

Get their attention with any object they find interest in. Baby not smiling? Try instant conditioning. Tickle them or make them laugh any way you can while showing them the chosen object. They will magically keep smiling as they see it because they will associate laughter with that object. Stand right in front of the baby and show this object to them in front of their face. Do not let them grab the object. All the while, use a soothing higher than your normal pitch voice. Slowly, back away from them to your desired spot while showing them this object. Keep them focused on it as you back up. Place your camera directly behind the object and you will have a baby looking at the camera.

The Fake Smile

Say something really random to the kid with the fake smile. "I'm going to eat your toe." "Say it to my nose hair." You know the typical things kids laugh at. They're usually bodily functions which we encourage them not to divulge in public. In this instance (while maintaining a certain degree of gracefulness) you can use this to your advantage. Especially, if you're not known to "kid" around. The result is a child with a genuine ear to ear grin.

Think of these tips the next time you find yourself dreading taking pictures. Following these tips will allow you to completely enjoy yourself and capture that perfect moment in time.



Stolen Photography Gear (cont. from page #1)

