

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 8, Issue 12

1 December 2016

Club Meetings and Other Bits of Information

The Camera Club of Central Minnesota will be meeting on the first Monday of each month with the second Monday of the month as back up starting in January 2017. We will meet 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.

Thursday, December 8, Bremer Community Room 104, "Christmas Party" Print and bring your best photos of the year. You are welcome to bring images from the past three months of subjects:

Notes from the November 2016 Meeting, by Barry Weber:

The Camera Club decided to schedule meetings on the First Monday of each Month starting in 2017, Using the Second Monday of the month as a backup when more convenient.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES SCHEDULED:

Christmas Party — Print and bring your best photo of the year. There will be snacks and beverages at this Meeting and John Roscoe will be coordinating that.

Monday, January 9, 2016, Bremer Community Room 104

PHOTO ASSIGNMENT: Your favorite "five" photos from 2016

Bill Vossler Will be Presenting in January on a recent trip.

Janice Springer shared some incredible images from India and will be presenting a full image set and talk about her experiences there at our March 2017 Meeting.

DURING THE NOVEMBER MEETING:

J Bruce Regan shared experiences from recent workshops he has attended at incredible

locations this Summer and Fall.

The new Projector is amazing and makes our meetings much more exciting with color correct images.

Some discussion about making meetings more engaging for members was discussed. It was a consensus that the group enjoys the informality of the meetings and that image sharing and such would be kept low key, on occasion having some input and critique. Members are always welcome to share images that are "off-topic" but are encouraged to keep those separate from the assigned subject for each sharing.

Special thanks to Michael Foster for all his time in scheduling our meetings at the library and to John Roscoe for his time in handling the dues for the club.

2017 PHOTO ASSIGNMENTS:

JANUARY - Your favorite "five" photos from 2016

FEBRUARY - Artificial Light

MARCH - Winter: snow, ice, outdoor sports, etc.

APRIL - Night Photography

MAY - Children

JUNE - Nature

JULY - Landscape

AUGUST - Animals

SEPTEMBER - Action (first Monday is Labor Day)

OCTOBER - Monochrome: Digital and/or print

NOVEMBER - Fall colors

DECEMBER - Christmas Party -- Print & bring your best 2017 photo

REMEMBER ALL YOUR PHOTO ASSIGNMENTS AND MEETING DATES ARE ONLINE



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The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Creating a Series for Yourself

Creating a Series for Yourself, Something Every Photographer Should Consider

A photo series to me was always just another project in school; whether it was for my digital photography class or film photography class, there was always something that had to be done in a series. Being done with school and not having any projects assigned eliminated the need to think about creating a series of work, but now I realize that a series of photos can be a pretty cool personal project. So one year out of college, I challenged myself to start working on a personal aerial series. This time there was no project that needed to be done, no deadline, no rules, I was free to do whatever I wanted to do. The only hard part was actually doing it, but I do believe that this is something that can help any photographer out.

What is a Series?

In my terms, a series of work is simply a grouping of photos that work together. They can be photos that are similar to one another or even tell a story. Basically a collection of work that works together in a way. Whatever it is, a series is made for a reason and can always be added to if needed.

My Series

For the Aerial Series I have been working on and look to continue, I decided to use my drone to shoot directly downward photos of things that I think are interesting. A lot of the time they are roadways,

water, or railroads but it always varies depending on what I can find. A lot of people ask me why I shoot this way with my drone and honestly, I shoot the way I do because I like to and I like the images I create from shooting that way. So what makes this a series for me is the fact that I will go back to the same location and take the same photo during a different time of the year. It is cool to see the change in color and really allows you to appreciate the beauty of the world we live in. I am very excited to shoot in the winter but I do expect plenty of challenges with snow and driving conditions on some of these roads.

Why I Started

Over the summer when I had some free time, I would always go through Instagram and see these amazing, out of this world drone photos on the big drone accounts. This was really inspiring to me and it is great to see the drone community share their awesome work online for others to view. Some of my favorite ones were the roadways between these crazy trees and long windy roads that you would never imagine seeing from above. Owning a drone myself, I knew I was capable of creating images that I thought were absolutely amazing on Instagram. For me this began an obsession, something clicked in my mind and I told myself that I need to start using my drone to create images like the ones I see online. This is where the

true aerial photography phase started and because of it, I am more into my drone than ever before.

The Process

To the typical person, I just own a drone and take cool pictures with it. I mean that's nice and all but I can assure you there is a lot more to it than just that. When it comes to photography, I am very specific in how I want my photos to look as any photographer probably is. A lot of people don't really think about what goes into the process of creating a photo, they just look at it. For us photographers, we need to put the time into our work to create images that we ourselves can appreciate and this is where we are able to challenge/better ourselves with a personal series of work. Our work has meaning to us which gives us a reason to share it with the world.

Location

This is one of the most important things for me when I create my aerial photos. Where can I go to create an awesome image? I spend hours on Google maps searching for places I think would look cool just for a photograph. Why? Because I want to make an image that I can appreciate; sure I can go anywhere else and take a picture, but what makes that so special? Finding a location with an interesting composition makes all the difference in the world to me, not to mention I like to go out and explore. I do have to say the



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one downside here is definitely finding a place to park my car and launch the drone to get some of the photos I do.

Time of Day

Another thing that many people don't think about when viewing a photo is when the photo was taken, unless it is obvious. Time of day is huge for me when it comes to light and shadows. Sometimes I like seeing the shadows from above and I know I can get some pretty cool work with those shadows, but for most of the work I have been doing, that softer light is something I look for. I am always aware of time of day and how fast the natural light can change.

Most of these photos are taken after sunset during the twilight hour which for me is the best time to be out there shooting. When it starts getting dark the camera becomes a magical thing with the ability to take longer exposures. A majority of my photos look like they were shot during the daytime because they are decently bright, again, this is more of an illusion that is created by shooting for longer periods of time. In the photos you can see the light trails from cars driving along the bend, these photos were taken just as the sun had set as it was starting to get dark. This could be a tricky thing to master, but you do your best to get there while it is still light so you can see and understand your location before that light goes away. I normally get there about an hour to an hour and a half before I

know it is going to get dark.

Taking the Photo

This may seem like the easiest part but it never really is "easy." When flying my drone, I need to make sure it is legal to fly where I do, especially with all the newer rules and regulations out there. I also like to make sure my drone is working completely fine before taking it up and just flying it. I'm afraid to lose one so I always run through a basic little checklist to make sure everything is running smoothly before I get it out to where I will be shooting. I check my batteries for any damage, make sure they are charged, then prep the drone and get it set to fly. Once I launch the drone I usually let it hover in front of me for about two minutes to make sure it is flying right and holding GPS signal and from there I am able to go take my photo. I know I may prep a bit much, but definitely better safe than sorry.

Depending on my location and the time I arrive to the spot, I may take a test flight and see how I want to set up my photo. Once I have an idea of how I want to shoot, I throw in a new battery and go out there to get what I set out there to get. When everything is all shot and done, I pack it up and head home to upload my photos and touch them up. If I am unhappy with what I got, then usually I find another time to go out and redo that

photo so I can get it how I want it to look.

Editing

A skill that all of us photographers do in our own way, editing plays a big role in a lot of our work but the typical person does not always understand the process. Sometimes editing is as simple as fixing up the colors in a photo and other times it can be something as advanced as patching up a house with trees so it looks like there was never a house there. Of course this depends on what you are editing and for personal work, you can really edit however you want and test new techniques and styles. When I edit, I usually do a few lens corrections, play with the color and then fine tune the photo if I need to. I have the option to add things to my photos or remove things from them, however it is not something I tend to do a lot of. My goal for this series was to keep the photos clean and consistent.

Conclusion

After writing about my series, I hope I have encouraged some to go out and work on their own. Photography is a great thing and definitely a great way to be creative so why not give yourself a little extra bit to do? I honestly had a great time recreating these photos and when I look back at them, I am happy I made the time to travel back to these places and photograph them in the fall.



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Photographing a Stranger is Easy



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Photographing a Stranger is easy; here is how.

Shooting someone's portrait can be a very personal experience. Even in a controlled environment such as a studio, the success of an image often depends on a photographer's ability to establish a rapport with their subject. That is difficult enough at the best of times, but what about those occasions when you don't control the environment, such as photographing total strangers in the street?

The thought of just stopping someone previously unknown and asking to shoot their portrait can be daunting to even the most experienced of photographers. And yet, as a travel and portrait photographer, some of my most successful portraits have been of people I met only a few moments before. What I have discovered capturing the portraits of hundreds if not thousands of total strangers all over the world is often, the success of a street portrait comes down to three things: preparation, selection, and approach.

The Approach

There is no way around this. The first time you walk up to a total stranger in the street and ask to take their photograph, you are going to be nervous. That happens to everyone. The good news is once you discover how easy it actually is to photograph someone you have only just met, the less nervous you are going to become. The key to that success is your

approach, providing three important pieces of information:

1. *an introduction*
2. *an explanation, and*
3. *a request.*

Since I started providing this information, I can honestly say almost everyone I have asked to photograph has agreed. So, let's take a look at these three steps in a little more detail.

Introduction: It's a simple fact that people generally won't allow a total stranger to take their photograph. So, the easiest way to tackle this is to cease being a total stranger. Introducing yourself with a smile immediately creates a more personal connection between you and your subject.

Explanation: Equally, someone isn't going to let you take their photograph if they don't know why you want it. By providing a reasonable explanation of what you are doing, they are far more likely to want to get involved.

Request: Even if your subject is willing to get involved, until they know exactly what you want of them, they are unlikely to agree.

Your approach doesn't need to be long and drawn out. In fact, the shorter, the better, something like:

"Hi. My name is Paul. I am currently traveling around the world taking photographs of interesting people I meet for a travel book I am working on. Would you mind standing in front of this building while I take your

photograph?

Simple as that. Often I will also quickly show them examples of other photographs I have taken, so they can get an idea of the style and look of the portrait I will take. In your case, these could be photographs of other people you have stopped. Or, if you are only just starting out and don't yet have examples to show, shoot some portraits with friends and family in a street settings, and use those as your examples. Many times, though, I don't even need to show examples, as many people will agree straight away.

Preparation

Of course, agreeing to a photograph is only half of the process. You have to actually take their portrait, and for that, preparation is the key. While your subject may be willing to let you take their photograph, generally, that means exactly that — a photograph, perhaps two — but in most cases, you will be pushing your luck to ask for a third. And they certainly aren't going to stand around while you go digging in your camera bag, looking for a fresh battery or a different lens.

So in reality, you are likely to have under a minute or so to set up your subject, compose your shot, and capture your image. That's a lot to do in under a minute, and you can save a lot of that time by being prepared ahead of time. Before you even introduce yourself, you should already have set up your camera and exposure and had a

look around to plan where you will shoot the portrait, already having a rough composition in mind. Finally, get your example photographs ready to show. All this will save precious moments, giving you more time to get your shot.

Selecting Your Subject

The successful choice of a subject will often come down to experience and instinct, and over time, you will learn to use all sorts of clues to help you select your subjects. But you can also alleviate many of the challenges of shooting street portraits through simple common sense. Generally speaking, anyone who is taking their time is likely to be more amenable than someone in a hurry, perhaps someone browsing a shop window or sitting in the park. These are the type of people more likely to have time to shoot, whereas someone rushing past on their way somewhere will likely not have time to spare.

Weather and location will also play a big part in the success of your shot. If it is winter time in a cold region of the world, most people will be wearing bulky coats, which generally don't look pleasing in portraits. And if you are in some sort of city center, people may well be carrying shopping or other bags. Most people will be uncomfortable leaving their coats and bags by the side of the road while you shoot their portrait and will be less likely to agree. These factors don't by themselves mean it is not possible to shoot in these conditions, but they do require consideration. During a recent trip to London in the winter, I ran into just such challenges. The solution I discovered was talking to people who were working in local shops and businesses, asking them to come outside quickly to shoot a portrait. They didn't have a coat on, as they were inside when I met

them, and they didn't have any bags, because they were at work at the time. Simply thinking through the challenges of the particular location you wish to shoot in can often go a long way in overcoming them.

Final Thoughts

Taking a portrait of a stranger is no different to taking a portrait of someone you know. It requires a connection between the photographer and their subject. By providing a simple introduction, explanation, and a clear request, a photographer will go a long way in creating that connection, allowing them to capture the perfect street portrait they are seeking. Be prepared, be friendly, and you may well discover as I did that actually, most people are quite happy to have their photograph taken.



THE BUILT-IN TRACKING HEAD AND ACCOMPANYING ACCESSORIES ARE THE PERFECT COMPANION TO VIEWING THE NIGHT SKY.

Night Photography, Shooting the Stars

The Best Piece of Equipment To Improve Your Star Photography

Improving night photography is an ever closing gap riddled with tech-tips, tricks, and expensive gear. The Star Adventurer by Sky Watcher-USA seeks to be the reasonably, all-in-one option to improve your starscape photography. The built-in tracking head and accompanying accessories are the perfect companion to viewing and photographing the night's sky.

I have found lots of opportunities to photograph beautiful starscapes shrouded by mag-

nificent geographic features and unencumbered by light pollution from the cities. Minnesota is a naturalist's playground of exploration and discovery. Moving around in these areas with lightweight gear for long periods of time has been my escape in the world of photography. For those of you that have a priority interest in star photography or just find yourself in the right place at the right time, the Star Adventurer is definitely a useful tool to elevate the level of creativity in your photos.

For those of you just entering the realm of starscape,

nightscape, or time-lapse photography, please review some of the past great articles that breakdown some simple and effective tools for stepping up your game. THIS article, A Few Tips on Astrophotography and How to Capture Stars at Night, by Patrick Hall, brings exactly what the title promises with a video chock full of helpful tips. The most important of which is the 500 rule. A quick review, the 500 Rule is as follows:

500 Divided By the Focal Length of Your Lens = The Longest Exposure (in Seconds) Before Stars Start to





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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.

Night Photography (continued)

“Trail”.

It is important to note the “trail” time frame, as in some cases this might be in the single digits of seconds. If you are attempting to compress a foreground object and choose to use a slower aperture, this doesn’t leave you much room for illuminating the stars. The result is a lot of trailing stars - an often desired effect; however, partially trailed stars just looks amateur, unintentional and poorly executed. A situation like this calls for a highly specialized piece of equipment that can track the camera with the stars. Enter the Star Adventurer by Sky Watcher.

The Star Adventurer, when locked onto Polaris, will evenly and accurately track across the night’s sky, following the chosen stars to increase illumination in your photographs. It sounds like a balance of high tech sorcery and something overly complicated to operate. At least this was my initial impression before I opened the package.

The Star Adventurer comes in a fairly compact package with a Latitude Base, Telephoto Counterweight, Equatorial Head, Polar Scope Illuminator, and Ballhead Adapter. A fair amount of easily assembled gear designed to increase the quality of your night photography. Right out of the package I was able to interpret and assemble the pieces. It is easy to identify the purpose of all the pieces and they break-down efficiently and easy. There are minimal locking and rotating pieces aside the motor head of the Star Adventurer, assuring a solid foundation for smooth and easy movement of the camera during exposures.

My favorite aspect of this product was the

multi-speed settings of the tracking. Aside from following the stars across the night’s sky, the Star Adventurer allows for time-lapse panning, solar tracking, and lunar tracking. I find that this greatly elevates the value of the product, making the Star Adventurer a very useful tool in a landscape photographer OR videographer’s bag. The price point of the Star Adventurer is wildly fair for the limitlessness of abilities. Roughly \$350 at B&H, this product is a strong and trustworthy addition to your nightscape photography bag.

The only main downfalls I can find with this product are weight and battery. Unfortunately it doesn’t seem possible to cut the weight down while still making it sturdy enough and strong enough to support a full rig up to 11 pounds. But when backpacking and seeking creative landscapes to photograph, every ounce matters, and this bad boy weighs in around five pounds; a noticeable addition to the bag. The battery also bugs me a bit, four AA batteries to power the motor - even with rechargeable, this is a less than environmentally friendly option; however, they seem to last a pretty long time at optimal temperature. I would prefer to see a dependable, internal charging system; however, this doesn’t make or break my recommendation. This is still a very solid piece of equipment.

Consider your work flow the next time you are shooting stars. Think about the limitlessness that an accurately tracking head will provide. You will quickly realize that a piece of tech like the Star Adventurer has valuable real estate in your photography bag.

