

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 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.

Assignments

Monday, April 3, 2017, Bremer Community Room 104. The assignment is: *Night Photography*.

Remember, all your photo assignments and meeting dates are online at

<http://cameraclubmn.com>

Get Your Photography Out of Hibernation

For many photographers winter can be a slow time of year both in terms of client work and personal motivation. Then spring comes and it's time to get out of hibernation. To get over the slump, there are lots of things you can work on from taking classes to improve weak areas from posing to lighting, to learning a new skill, to exploring a slow-season-proof side niche, to using your photography skills to give back to your community. And none of these ideas are limited just to winter. Any time business is slow or you are looking for a creativity boot, give one of these a try – all of which can be done with very little space and on a budget.

Studio Photography Techniques

Usually shoot outdoors? When things are slow, or if you are limited to shooting indoors, try branching out for a studio look. While this isn't for everyone, it is a useful skill to have to

be able to appeal to a wider variety of clients. Check out classes like Build a DIY Home Studio or Home Studio Starter Kit to get ideas on how to start your own home studio even in very small spaces. It's not hard to get started with an inexpensive Flashpoint background stand for a little more than \$50.00 and a vinyl Savage backdrop that unlike seamless paper, is wrinkle-resistant and never needs to be replaced.

Use a shooting tent and backdrop to practice product photography and studio techniques.

Headshots

Everyone needs a headshot. Everyone. Winter is a great time to get up to speed indoors with practice on friends, then clients! Get up to speed quickly with a headshot class from CreativeLive whether you want to learn how to make Commercial and Iconic Headshots or learn the Business of Headshots or simply How to Take the Perfect Headshot. Even if you don't have a lot of space, a simple setup using window light and a kit like the Savage Collapsible Stand Kit with black and white background options will get you started quickly and on a budget.

Product Photography

Perhaps no form of photography is easier to do in a small space than product photography. A small shooting tent that can go on a table-top is an easy way to get started with product photography even if you live in a studio apartment. The *Angler Tent* is a good option that comes equipped with its own lights and folds up flat for storage. It also comes with three different vinyl backgrounds so you can get a variety of looks easily. An online class like *Tabletop Fundamentals* can also help you get up and running quickly.

Education

When things are slow or you are stuck indoors, it's the perfect time to take a class to



Inside this issue:

CLUB MEETING AND OTHER BITS OF INFORMATION	1
GET YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY OUT OF HIBERNATION	1
CHALLENGING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION	2
ALTERNATIVE STORES TO B&H	3
PROCEDURES FOR GETTING PRINTS	6



The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Get Your Photography Out of Hibernation (cont)



improve areas in which you need improvement or learn new skills. On-demand classes from CreativeLive are taught by industry leaders. Click and Company offers a wide variety of classes with monthly starts where you can study along or receive detailed feedback from instructors. Also be sure to check out if any photographers you follow offer classes, ebooks, or mentoring sessions.

Even when business is slow, re-edit old photos to learn new techniques or take a class.

Editing

Even if you are not out shooting, you can still work on your photography skills by focusing on editing. Slow times are a great time to calibrate your screen to ensure your monitor matches

your prints by using a calibrator like those available from Xrite. It's also a great time to learn more editing skills, experiment with new presets you may have been wanting to try and tweak such as the very popular ones from VSCO, or update to the latest version of Adobe's Lightroom, Photoshop Elements, or catch-up on Photoshop CC updates. No new images are needed, but you may love the results of going back and re-editing some of your favorite old images.

Practice

There is no substitute for simply getting out and shooting! I've heard a lot of excuses from aspiring photographers about why they can't bring their camera out. Don't be afraid to shoot in public, whether it's your own family

or strangers. A good camera bag you have probably noticed photographers everywhere using is the Peak Design Everyday Backpack that doesn't draw attention because it doesn't look like a camera bag and is also comfortable enough to wear for long stretches. It has tons of room as well as essential security features, like side-access and ways to secure zippers when not in use. You should also ditch the strap that came with your camera and opt for a more comfortable and stylish strap like those from Trillo and Son that will enable you to carry your camera around for longer stretches of time and will look impressive to boot.

Whatever, you do, get out there and have fun!

IT'S ALSO A GREAT TIME TO LEARN MORE EDITING SKILLS, EXPERIMENT WITH NEW PRESETS YOU MAY HAVE BEEN WANTING TO TRY ...

Challenge Your Photographic Composition

Five Tips to Challenge Your Photography Composition

When it comes to photography, it's easy to fall into a comfort zone and default to the rule of thirds or a few tried-and-true techniques when it comes to how you compose your images. For photographer Melissa Hines, even after several years as a serious professional, she noticed herself defaulting to the same go-to compositions time and time again. Melissa tends to place her subjects in the same area of the frame and use lines in the same way in image after image. After a while, her work began to feel very structured.

Nevertheless, Melissa admires artists who create images with a relaxed, organic feel with more rules broken than just a center composition. Because Melissa wanted to grow in how she chose to compose images, she approached Liz DeGroff of Four Dots Photography to join her in this diptych project they called Composed. The only requirement was that they needed to push ourselves out of our comfort zones. They needed to break rules that they normally don't break and they needed to try out more complex compositions that they normally ignore.

Here are some of the tips Melissa and Liz have learned

while stepping out of our composition comfort zones:

Tip #1

Follow one compositional rule and then allow yourself to break others. If you are still following one rule, your choices will feel more intentional and your image will still work. You can ignore the rule of thirds or golden spiral and place your subject at the edge of the frame, but to make this choice feel intentional, use leading lines, curves, and framing to lead the eye to the subject.

Tip #2

Layering, layering, layering. Include elements in the fore-



ground, middle, and background to add depth and an organic feeling. Play around with which layer your subject is in. In order to keep your subject from getting lost within the image, look for elements or people in the scene to frame your subject and use leading lines and curves.

Tip #3

Practice changing your angle. Simply changing your angle can get you out of your comfort zone. You will discover new ways to frame your subject or new leading lines. It

changes up how much of the story you are telling and the way you are telling it.

Tip #4

Use people as a compositional element. Photographers talk a lot about moving the eye through the frame to the subject with leading lines and framing. Well, why not use other people within the frame for that purpose? Every person within the frame doesn't have to be an additional subject; they can

play a supporting role to lead the eye to your subject and story.

Tip #5

Play up the contrast of opposites as a compositional tool. Small versus big. Up versus down. Light versus shadow. Curves versus lines. Using opposites is yet another way to move the eye through the image with a large visual impact. And it also changes up what story you are telling within the image.



Alternative Stores to B&H

Let me make it clear that this article isn't a knock on B&H Photo. In fact, B&H is one of my favorite places to get my gear. I've bought gear from them in the past, and I'm sure I'll buy more gear from them in the future. They often have great deals, not just on photography gear, either.

Their free expedited shipping is a great feature, and if you happen to be in the New York City area, you can even pick up your orders at their superstore within an hour.

Their website has a live chat feature that I've used on multiple occasions to get more details about a product I liked.

In short, B&H Photo does it the right way, which is why they have such a loyal following of customers, myself included!

Variety is the Spice of Life

As good as B&H is, sometimes you have to turn to other outlets to find what you're looking for.

Perhaps B&H doesn't have the item you want or need. Maybe they have it in stock, but the price isn't what you were hoping. In those instances, having some variety regarding where you can get the gear you need for a good price is obviously a huge benefit to you.

After all, photography is an expensive endeavor, so having some healthy competition between online photography retailers benefits you (and your pocketbook) in the end. Of course, you also want to buy from reputable establishments too.

The question is, what alternatives are there to B&H Photo that have the same level of service, quality of product, and commitment to customer service? Let's find out.

Adorama

Much like B&H Photo, Adorama isn't just a photography store. In fact,

they have an incredible selection of electronics from cameras to TVs to computers. Add in musical instruments, drones, printers, and scopes, and you've got the makings for a one-stop shopping experience.

Adorama has built an excellent reputation among photographers over the last 35 years because of their commitment to offering great products at excellent prices and following up the sale with top-notch customer service.

That's one of the reasons why Adorama is one of the top five electronics retailers according to Consumer Reports.

Adorama isn't just a place to buy great photography gear, either. You can also rent gear through the Adorama Rental Company or sell your old gear as part of the Adorama Used + Trade program. Whether you're after a new camera, a used lens or you need to rent a piece of gear (or an entire photography studio), Adorama is the place to do it!

PHOTOGRAPHERS
TALK A LOT ABOUT
MOVING THE EYE
THROUGH THE
FRAME TO THE
SUBJECT WITH
LEADING LINES
AND FRAMING.



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Alternative Stores to B&H (continued)



NOT ONLY DOES MIKE'S SPECIALIZE IN OFFERING NEW PHOTOGRAPHY GEAR FOR SALE, BUT THEY ALSO OFFER A HOST OF RELATED SERVICES.



Hunt's Photo and Video

If you're after a more mom and pop feel to your photography gear shopping, Hunt's Photo and Video is a prime choice. Even though this outfit is the largest camera retailer in New England, you still get the personal, one-on-one assistance that you associate with shopping at a small store on Main Street.

Hunt's Photo and Video has been owned and operated by the Farber family for three generations, and their commitment to their customers shows in everything they do.

What started in the 1950s as a drug store is today a top-quality camera store run by Gary and Scott Farber, two brothers who are among the nicest and most genuine people you'll ever meet.

But don't think that this mom and pop (or brother and brother) operation is quaint. Their 30,000 square foot flagship store is something to behold. And like bigger companies like B&H Photo, Hunt's Photo and Video keeps its finger on the pulse of the industry, hosting a Show and Sale each fall that showcases all the latest in the world of photography.

Hunt's is also well-known for their support of the military, their commitment to the community, and their support of organizations like the American Cancer Society.

If you live in New England, it's worth a trip to Hunt's.

And if you aren't in New England, it's worth a visit to their website!

Mike's Camera

If you haven't heard of Mike's Camera, you've been missing out.

They have ten stores in Colorado and Northern California, and if you ask anyone in those areas where they go to buy their camera gear, they'll probably say Mike's.

Not only does Mike's specialize in offering new photography gear for sale, but they also offer a host of related services.

Turn your images into cards, calendars, and metal prints with Mike's printing services.

Rent just about any gear you might need through their rental program too. Heck, you can even take your broken gear to Mike's to get it repaired! All that is offered with top-notch customer service that has garnered Mike's Camera tons of awards.

In fact, they're a past winner of the Best Camera Store award by Photo Trade News. So don't take my word for it - if Mike's is winning awards from the photography industry, you know you can trust them for all your photography needs.

Roberts Camera

Perhaps not as well known as B&H Photo, Roberts Camera is an excellent alternative that offers new, used, and refurbished gear of all sorts and types.

Like Hunt's Photo and Video, Roberts Camera started out as a small mom and pop shop that sold everything from jewelry to fishing poles, but at least initially, no cameras or other photography gear.

That changed in the late 1960s when Robert and Rose Pallman decided to add cameras to their inventory. With that Minolta camera started a journey to becoming one of the most trusted names among photography retailers.

Today, Roberts Camera is a premiere source for photo, video, and electronics equipment. They have a rental program and an extensive educational program for aspiring photographers too.

Like the other retailers on this list, they pride themselves on offering quality products at prices that are fair.

What's more, Roberts has dedicated employees whose mission is to serve you and your specific needs. In fact, many of their employees have been with the company for well over a decade, so they not only have the photography knowledge to help you meet your goals but extensive experience in customer service as well.

Roberts Camera might be based in Indianapolis, but their footprint has grown to be worldwide over nearly 50 years since they sold their first camera. If you need good gear at a good price, consider checking them out.

Unique Photo

Another east coast retailer makes our list, this time, it's Unique Photo.

What started in a small store in Brooklyn more than five decades ago has grown into one of the largest privately owned photo supply distributors in the world.

What's fueled that growth is an unparalleled commitment to the customer.

Not only does Unique Photo have a reputation for taking care of its patrons before, during, and after the sale, but they are also highly regarded for their commitment to the quality of the products they sell. That includes more than 20,000 products in their superstore, so you're sure to find what you need when you visit Unique Photo's store or website.

You can even try before you buy and rent a piece of equipment before your purchase, that way you know it's what you want.

Whether you need a digital camera, film, canvas prints, framing, or something in between, Unique Photo is a great place to start!

Samy's Camera

Like B&H Photo and other entrants on this list, Samy's specializes in all sorts of electronic goodies. Photography, video, studio supplies, drones...you name it!

Regardless of what you're looking for, Samy's will help you find what you need and do so in a way that makes you feel comfortable and confident in your purchase.

That's because Samy's Camera has been at it for more than 40 years. In that time, they've built the knowledge and skills to offer the best customer service around.

Add in an excellent collection

of educational opportunities and a used and trade-in program, and you've got the makings for a top-notch photography store.

Focus Camera

Focus Camera is yet another camera retailer with an excellent reputation that you should consider as an alternative to B&H Photo.

Based in the New York tri-state area, focus camera has stores where locals can shop in person, as well as a beautiful and easy-to-use website where you can find anything from a mirrorless camera body to binoculars to office equipment and everything in between.

What I like about Focus Camera is that they often have incredible sales, so you can get more bang for your buck.

And if you're concerned about the ability of other stores to have what you need in stock, consider this: Focus Camera has a 100,000+ square foot warehouse where they keep more than 30,000 products on hand. They ship more than 8,000 packages a day around the world to satisfy the needs of their customers.

That's a lot of gear!

And, as any good business does, Focus Camera isn't just about making money. They take great pride in their civic participation and giving back to the community.

Tons of gear. Great prices. Friendly, knowledgeable staff. You can't go wrong with Focus Camera!

Amazon

When it comes to selection,

it's hard to beat the inventory of photography gear that Amazon has.

No matter what your brand preference - Nikon, Canon, Sony, and so on - Amazon will have it.

Plus, if you're a Prime member, if you find Prime-eligible items you can get your new toy or accessory in two days. That's a nice feature when you can't wait to get your hands on a new piece of gear!

Something else that's great about Amazon is that you have access to all sorts of customer reviews. Just scroll down the listing page to see what others have experienced with the camera, lens, tripod, or another camera accessory you have your eye on.

Amazon also has great sales, particularly around the holidays. So if you can wait until the holiday shopping season arrives, you might just find the best deal on camera gear on Amazon.

Whatever route you choose, any of the retailers listed above are a great option for finding good gear at good prices. Sometimes B&H Photo will be the winner, but if you can't find what you need at the price you want, give one of these other trustworthy outfits a try.



THEY SHIP MORE THAN 8,000 PACKAGES A DAY AROUND THE WORLD TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS.





CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA

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.

Procedures for Getting Prints



To exist in the modern world is to collect digital memories. On your smartphone. From your camera. From a gadget you wear on your forehead. The images are piling up, and most of them are doomed to live out their existence in simple digital formats and ever-changing social platforms. You should print them.

Not all of them, of course — in fact, not even one percent. But if there are even a hundred photos that you value, then you should print them out — nicely! — and put them on a wall or your desk.

There are four key ways to do this: Order Out, DIY, Pro-Grade, and DIY-Simple.

I've experimented with all four, and in the process have learned a great deal about printing photos. So when you get the urge to have people ooh and aaah over your art in real-life person, consider these options.

Order Out

You can order prints from any number of sites online, including Walmart, Walgreens, Snapfish or Shutterfly. In general, the consumer-oriented sites are fine for people who want 4x6 prints from vacations or graduation parties. But that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about proper prints suitable for your wall or desk frame.

If that's what you're after, two sites rise to the top: MPIX.com or AdoramaPix.com. They both offer a wide variety of options, including mounted and framed wall hangings, fully printed books, and, of course, straight prints on paper, which you can mount yourself or place in an album. The prices are reasonable, they both work very promptly, and in my

experience the prints have been excellent reproductions of the digital files.

DIY

Though it's always nice to have a print show up at your doorstep framed and ready to hang, there are advantages to printing at home. You can run test images, tweak the processing, and crank out as many copies as you want. Canon's Pixma line offers high-quality inkjet printing of your best work, in dimensions up to 8x14.

Pro-Grade

If you're serious about scoring gallery-quality, large-format prints whenever you want, this the SureColor P600 (\$766) is your printer. It's pricey, but the results are astounding, thanks to its dedicated, photo-specific inks and the precision nozzles used to generate the images. It's not a multifunction, all-in-one printer, which of course means it's focusing on doing one thing exceptionally well (case in point: it takes nine ink cartridges). It also features wi-fi connectivity and printing straight from mobile devices — though you might be disappointed in results from an unedited smartphone photo being printed by something of this caliber.

DIY Lite

If you're looking to fill a bulletin board or an album with pics, there's no shame in low-balling the whole process and grabbing a quickie 4x6 printer. The Selphy CP1200 (\$97) cranks out excellent prints at up to 4x6 sizes, via a direct connection, card slot, or wi-fi, including mobile devices.

