

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 9, Issue 12

December 2017

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, December 4, 2017, Bremer Community Room 104. "Christmas Party", print and bring your best 5 photos from 2017.

Monday, January 8, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104. Night — Shoot street light, star light, Christmas lights, lighted buildings, etc.

Monday, February 5, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104. Architecture — New or old building that are local or from your travels, inside or outside, details or the entire structure.

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

<http://camerclubmn.com>



A Freelance Lifestyle

A freelance lifestyle is a goal that many aspire towards in photography and videography. It's a goal Jim achieved this time exactly one year ago. After a brief honeymoon period, he quickly learned some important lessons that I'd like to share with those who look to be making the leap across the great divide.

Everyone's journey to full-time freelance is

different, so here's a little background on his. He had a corporate job in London for nine years, six years in he started picking up some work on the side in photography and loved it, thus began his pursuit of a freelance life. Having a mortgage and bills to pay meant that going cold turkey wasn't an option, so he worked it until he was in a position that he'd be confident enough that he'd be able to generate enough income in photography to go full time.

The first few months were a blast. No boss any longer to pander to, unlimited free time, afternoon weekday meetings, and more opportunities to travel. But by month three, it was clear that he hadn't been any more productive as when he was working at it on the side. After spending so much time in a hierarchical corporate role, he realized that with no boss and no structure, it's very easy to waste days doing stuff that's not productive.

So here are ten lessons learned in the last year that have helped make sure one gets the most out of this phase of life, professionally and personally.

You Can't Do Everything Yourself

Being a freelance photographer doesn't mean you just take pictures. You also have to be a marketer, an accountant, a receptionist, customer support, a graphic designer, and everything else in between. So try to maximize your time doing the stuff that gets you paid by outsourcing some of these tasks where possible and within budget. One can have the social media and bookkeeping looked after by a virtual assistant, for example, which probably will save five to ten hours per week.

Be Disciplined With Your Time

This one is harder than you realize, especially if aren't used to being your own boss. There are many techniques that can help with this, but I've found that only checking messag-



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A Freelance Lifestyle (continued)

es and emails at set intervals throughout the day helps massively. It keeps your head on the task at hand rather than getting constantly distracted.

Don't Sleep In and Do Exercise

Getting up early for the gym or a run before you even pick up your phone or sit down at your desk will make you feel like you are already winning before you've replied to a single email. Or maybe it's a ten-minute Headspace meditation, but whatever it is, set your alarm and do something good for the mind and body.

Find Time to Switch Off

Get it out of your head that you need to be on call 24/7. You might not mind it, but your loved ones certainly will. Nobody wins if you have your head in your phone replying to emails every minute of the day. When you're not working, switch off and enjoy the time you have made for yourself with the decision to be in charge of your free time.

And if you are going to work while you're on vacation. Set aside time specifically for working your photography business, then put it down and unwind. Being in charge of your time will increase your productivity and make you generally feel happier.

A Phone Call Trumps an E-mail

Here's another super easy time saver, pick up the phone instead of sending that long email. Even better, organize a video call. It's not only much more personable, it saves so much time. Just remember to jot key notes down in your

Evernote to refer to during or straight after if your memory is as bad as mine.

Stay Organized

Find and stick to a system that tracks your projects so that things don't fall through the cracks. With so many platforms for clients to communicate through, don't expect yourself to remember what needs actioning day-to-day, write it down instead! Personally, I use the "Getting Things Done" technique through Omnifocus to run my whole life. By jotting every actionable task down that takes more than two minutes gives me peace of mind to be as productive as possible.

Keep Learning

This one is so important. No matter how good you think you are in your chosen field of photography, it will never be bad to know more. It will keep your vault of ideas constantly refreshed, and help you grow as a photographer. Find those online sources that inspire you, visit your local galleries and go to workshops. It's so easy to set this one aside each week, but one year down the line, you'll realize how important learning a little every week is, and how much better you are as a photographer and a business owner you are because of it. These days I shoot more video than photography and can't recommend Story & Heart and Simeon Quarrie enough as great resources.

Make Connections With Like Minded People

Being a freelance photographer can be an incredibly solitary experience for large parts of your week, mainly during heavy editing sessions. So scatter a few coffee meetings with peers to bounce ideas off and feel inspired by. Better yet and if your budget allows, look into working from a shared workspace. Networking with like-minded people in person is a great way to maintain your enthusiasm during heavy editing periods and meet people to collaborate with on projects.

Stay Clear With Your Goals

It's so easy to say yes to everything. Your friends and family will recommend you to everyone who is looking for photography or video, but it doesn't mean you should take the work. I have dabbled in web design in the past, and once spent the best part of two weeks working on a site for a client at the beginning of my full-time freelance life. I got paid for my time, but have no intention doing web design going forward. That time could have been spent securing bookings in photography and video, or shooting stuff that would get me the work I want. It's easy to be persuaded when you will get paid well for stuff like this, so just make sure that if you are taking it on for the right reasons.

Be Nice

This one is the simplest and most obvious one to me, yet I



NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU THINK YOU ARE IN YOUR CHOSEN FIELD OF PHOTOGRAPHY, IT WILL NEVER BE BAD TO KNOW MORE.



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am astounded that so many people seem to forget to be friendly, courteous, and polite with everyone they come into contact with. So much of being a photographer, a film

director, or a videographer is extremely personable work. Your portfolio will get you to the door, but your friendliness will get you through it. I have had countless recommendations,

or repeat business from clients because the work is good AND I'm easy to get along with.

For me, freelancing was

The 50mm Lens

The "nifty fifty" is probably the most popular lens for photography. Why? Well, it has a ton of virtues, not the least of which is that they can be found on the cheap (the f/1.8 versions, anyway) and it's an incredibly versatile focal length.

In fact, ask any seasoned photographer what the first lens you should buy is, and I'm willing to bet that the vast majority of them will say a 50mm lens.

With that in mind, let me explain a few reasons why a 50mm lens is the best one you can buy.

It's Small

Nifty fifty lenses are petite with a small form factor and a weight that's typically just a handful of ounces. That's great for a couple of reasons.

First, the lighter the lens, the less weight you have to carry and the less weight you have to bring to your eye each time you want to take a photo.

LF Banner Buy image

Secondly, smaller lenses are certainly less conspicuous, so if you're doing a little street photography, people won't notice your little nifty fifty as much as they will a huge 300mm telephoto lens.

And since it's so easily portable, there's no excuse for leaving your camera at home.

The more you shoot, the better the photographer you will be!

It's Inexpensive

Most photographers have a 50mm lens in their camera bag, usually the cheaper f/1.8 version that you can pick up for about \$150 brand new.

But if I can pass on a tip, there are crazy deals on used 50mm f/1.4 and f/1.2 lenses that are being sold by other photographers just like you. As a matter of fact, see for yourself. Rather than spending \$1,300 on a brand-new f/1.2, see what deals you can find on used ones!

Low Light? No Problem!

Even the inexpensive f/1.8 version of the 50mm lens is great in low-light shooting conditions. That's because compared to a kit lens, which usually maxes out at f/5.6, you get eight times as much light coming into the lens.

That means you can compensate for low light much more easily by simply opening the aperture.

That also means that you can get high-quality low-light photos without boosting the ISO as high for cleaner results. You can shoot with faster shutter speeds in low-light situations, too, making the 50mm lens an ideal choice for low-light photography.

It's Sharp

Prime lenses are usually sharper than zoom lenses. There's a couple of reasons for this, including

the fact that prime lenses have less moving parts and they have fewer glass elements through which light has to travel.

Without as much stuff inside, the integrity of the light passing through the lens remains intact, resulting in sharper photos.

What's more, the wider aperture values that 50mm lenses offer means you can use a faster shutter speed to avoid camera shake while still getting a well-exposed image.

It's Versatile

Perhaps the greatest virtue of a 50mm lens is that it's incredibly versatile. You can use it on a full frame camera or a crop sensor camera (where it behaves more like a short telephoto lens).

You can use a 50mm lens for portraiture, landscapes, street photography, and you can even reverse mount it on your camera for macro photography.

It's a focal length that's not so long that you feel like the images you take are claustrophobic, but it's not so short that you feel like the image has too much detail in it, either.

In other words, it's a perfect focal length for a beginner photographer that



PRIME LENSES ARE
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The 50mm Lens (continued)



needs something that can serve multiple purposes.

Now, I understand that regardless of how popular this lens is, many of you simply don't use it enough to justify keeping it.

So to you, I recommend selling your 50mm lens to someone who would enjoy it so you can take the cash you get and buy some glass you'll use.

There are plenty of places to sell your unneeded camera gear, but I recommend Lensfinder. Post your lens for sale today.

50mm Lenses Produce Great Bokeh

There's something special

about 50mm lenses on an artistic front as well. Prime lenses in general usually produce better bokeh than zoom lenses.

That's especially true as you move into higher maximum apertures like f/1.8, f/1.4, and f/1.2.

So, when you're out shooting photos and you want a nice, blurry background or lights that twinkle in blurry goodness, a 50mm lens is just what you want.

It's Just a Great Learning Tool

A 50mm lens is simply a great tool for learning about photography. As I noted earlier, you can use a 50mm lens for all manner

and type of subjects.

But because it's a prime lens, you don't have a zoom to rely on to frame up different types.

That means you have to "zoom with your feet" and learn how to frame images by moving around to get the shot you want.

What's more, since you're limited to a fixed focal length, you have to think a little more purposefully about the composition of the shot before you fire the shutter.

Taking a little extra time to consider the composition, framing, perspective, and so forth will only improve your images!

INTERNAL DRIVES
CAN ALSO BE
CONFIGURED IN A
RAID ARRAY.

Storing Your Ever Increasing Photo Collection

While we often spend significant sums of money on our camera equipment, one area we tend to neglect is the computer side of this hobby of ours. In particular, storage. Most modern computers will play nicely with RAW files, without any lag. However, as we upgrade our cameras, those RAW files tend to get bigger and bigger, often filling the hard drives in our computers. So how can we manage our ever-increasing collections of images?

Internal Drives

If you run a desktop PC or older Mac Pro, then it is pretty easy to add internal hard drives. Most internal hard drives are of the 3.5 inch type but can have spin

speeds of 5400rpm, 7200rpm, and in some cases 10000rpm. For most purposes, the 7200rpm versions are the best compromise between price and speed. In terms of storage capacity, these drives can go up to 12TB these days but we are getting in pretty expensive territory at those sizes.

The HDD is the best bang for buck.

The other option in internal drives are what are known as Solid State Drives or SSDs. These are ultra fast drives with no moving parts however for photographers, the price v capacity ratio is not favorable. There is a third option here called hybrid drives. These have a

low capacity SSD attached to a normal mechanical HDD. They are often significantly faster than HDDs in tests but due to the way they work, I am not convinced they offer any great speed boosts when editing images.

SSDs are much faster but at a cost.

Internal drives can also be configured in a RAID array. This is where multiple identical drives work together to create one faster drive. There are several different configurations for RAID drives, some maximise the storage capacity, 2 x 2TB drives making one fast 4TB drive. Others will use those two drives to create a fast 2TB drive with failsafe ability. If one drive dies, the



data is still secure. RAID arrays can be created either via software or using a hardware add-on.

External Drives

Gone are the days of tediously slow USB 1.0 external drives. Today modern computers will use ultra-fast USB 3 or even faster Thunderbolt interfaces to connect external hard drives. Like internal drives, external drives come in a range of spin speeds and capacities with prices to match. They also come in 2.5 inch and 3.5 inch varieties. The former get their power from your computer via the USB or Thunderbolt bus. This makes them more suitable for travel with portable computers rather than as a main storage drive. The 3.5 inch versions usually carry their own external power supply but are often significantly faster than their smaller counterparts.

Although slightly more expensive than internal drives, external drives are easier to connect and to archive as your image collection gets bigger. They also are very suitable as backup drives.

Network Attached Storage (NAS)

NAS's are external boxes

that house multiple internal hard drives, usually in a RAID formation. Their chief advantage is that the hard drives can easily be swapped and upgraded. As they can house 8 or even 12 drives, their capacity is phenomenal. They also work alone from your computer, being attached to your Ethernet router instead. This means you can access them from wherever you are in the world.

There is one very big caveat with NAS drives though. Lightroom and some other image management do not work well with them. There are workarounds but they tend to be convoluted and unreliable. NAS drives are better suited to archiving your images rather than as a working drive.

Storage Strategies

While it is nice to be able to store all your images in one place, as your collection grows it may not always be possible. Fortunately, modern image management software makes it very easy to split our collections over multiple drives. Lightroom, for example, works using catalogs that reference images in their stored locations. You can easily split off

older, less used images into a separate catalog and move them to an alternative location.

Another consideration is backups. If your photographic collection is important to you, you should have multiple backups of your work. These can be onsite and offsite. An onsite backup is usually on external hard drives carefully stored away. Offsite backup could be external drives moved to another location or more commonly backed up via a cloud server such as Backblaze.

As your image collection increases, it is important to plan ahead and have a storage strategy. If you have a desktop PC with plenty of hard drive bays, then internal drives are probably the best option. If you use an all in one PC, an iMac or a powerful laptop, then the best option will be fast external drives. For archiving a large collection that you will not frequently work on, NASs are a good option.



IT'S MUCH MORE ACCURATE AND APPROPRIATE TO MAKE A WORK OF ART AS OPPOSED TO TAKE A WORK OF ART

“Make” or “Take” a Photograph

I'd be rich if I had a nickel every time someone asked, "Could you **TAKE** my picture?" The reason **TAKE** is in bold is because I take exception to that word with regards to photography. I much prefer the word **MAKE** vs. take. A photo is the final product. It's much more accurate and

appropriate to make a work of art as opposed to take a work of art. For instance, a sculptor doesn't "take" a statue, he "makes" it. A designer doesn't take a blueprint, he makes it. An oil painter doesn't take a framed masterpiece, he makes it. So why is the word

TAKE relegated to a photographer? To make a photograph implies it's creative, deserves greater status, and it's an art piece.

A photograph should be made. A composition gets thought out, therefore, the photo is made. Before the photographer presses the





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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.

“Make” or “Take” a Photograph (continued)



shutter, he or she needs to evaluate the arrangement of elements seen through the viewfinder. Is it chaotic? Are the elements orderly? If it's chaotic, what can the photographer do to make the composition simpler? You make this happen and change the position from where you currently stand, not take this happen. To make this happen, get to a higher point, squat down to eliminate background distractions or move the subject to a different location. Do more than raise the camera to your eye and press the shutter. Think about where the subject should be placed to make the most dynamic composition.

We're Not Gonna TAKE It!

A photograph should be made. Thought should go into the lighting. The best light occurs at sunrise and sunset when the warm colored sun is low in the sky. It provides modeling, texture and intrigue to the subject. It may even need to be augmented using a flash. So be it. Make the picture, don't simply take what's given. If it's noon, use a diffuser when you work with a small subject to soften the light—make the photo. Don't just take it and accept the light for what it is. Photograph subjects in the shade. Use the shaded side of a building to provide soft light. Avoid bright highlights and deep shadows that cause unacceptable contrast ratios. Return at a different time of day—so be it. Make it happen!

A photograph should be made. Research the subjects you photograph. Some photographers go with the flow and take what they're given. I'm a photographer who wants to return from a session maximizing my potential. I prefer to make it happen. If

my travels bring me to an unfamiliar area, I research the best locations, the best time of day to be at each spot, the restrictions I may encounter, and other important details. Upon arrival, I apply the rules of good composition and light to make my images. Apply the same concepts to local outings. For instance, when does the light best strike the tallest buildings, when do the ducks that live on the local ponds give birth, what festivals are going on where I may get some great character images, or when does the biggest proliferation of wildflowers bloom? Learn, know and research the important details to make it happen.

From now on, no longer go out and take pictures. Go into the field and make them. Think before you press the shutter. Do more than simply raise the camera to your eye and “click.” Process what can be done to make the scene in the view finder before you make the exposure. Go beyond the basics to bring your picture making to the next level.

