

# THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



## The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 10, Issue 2

February 2018

### 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, 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.

**Monday, March 12, 2018 (rooms not available on the 5th), Bremer Community Room 104. Rural** — Could be fields, animals, harvesting, country landscapes, etc.

**Monday, April 3, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104, Moving Water** — Waterfalls, dams, fountains, streams, etc.

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

<http://cameraclubmn.com>

~~~~~

#### Notes from January Meeting

After the viewing of member photographs, the group met to discuss how the meetings should proceed in the future. We liked the photographs that we had been viewing but did not want to merely have a travelogue. The emphasis should be on photography, such as how the picture was lighted, what was the depth of field, what were the cam-

era settings, etc.

We want to have presentations concerning the use of photography such as the making of a book of photos, the making of landscape photos, the making of high-definition photos, etc.

Also suggested was photo-walks, visiting various locations for photographing. More discussion will follow and decisions will be made.

After we discussed what the meetings should contain, Barry Weber displayed and discussed some new photography equipment consisting of a new camera and several new lenses.

#### Printing on Canvas

One of the great things about being a photographer these days is that there are tons of choices for turning your photos into awesome prints. But one of my favorite ways to print my images is on one of the oldest substrates around: canvas.

I have had prints made on other materials, and many of them look fantastic. But there's just something about canvas that gives my images that added something that turn them into a real viewing experience.

In thinking about why I like canvas so much, and why you should too, I came up with three primary reasons.

#### There's Depth and Texture to Canvas

One of the challenges of photography is presenting a three-dimensional subject in a two-dimensional medium. That means we have to trick the viewer's eye into seeing that two-dimensional print in a way that informs them of the actual space and scale of the subject. When you print your images on canvas, you get help in that regard because of the tex-



#### Inside this issue:

|                                             |   |
|---------------------------------------------|---|
| CLUB MEETING AND OTHER BITS OF INFORMATION  | 1 |
| PRINTING ON CANVAS                          | 1 |
| FIVE MISTAKES KILLING YOUR LANDSCAPE PHOTOS | 2 |
| CONTROLLING LIGHTING                        | 3 |
| COMMON MISTAKES IN MAKING PHOTOGRAPHS       | 5 |
| MY PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY                  | 6 |



# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Printing on Canvas (continued)



**CHOOSE YOUR PRINTING COMPANY CAREFULLY, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU'LL END UP WITH GORGEOUS, COLORFUL PRINTS.**

ture of the canvas itself.

The fine ridges of the canvas give your images depth and dimension, just like they do for a painting. Rather than the image being a perfectly flat print, the canvas helps bring the print to life in a way that no other medium can.

That texture isn't just evident when you look at the photo, but when you touch it, too. And that's perhaps the best thing about canvas, it makes the viewer want to reach out and touch the photo to interact with it.

### Colors Pop on Canvas

Of course, there is a caveat here. Only some canvas prints have bright, contrasty colors.

If you choose a printing company that doesn't approach printing in the right way, you'll get a canvas that's dull, boring, and probably not well made.

However, if you get canvas prints from the experts at CanvasHQ, you can rest assured that your print will have beautiful, vibrant colors. Part

of that is due to their dedication to the process of making the best quality canvases around.

Another part of it is the fact that you get so many different options when it comes to the finish applied to your print. You can get a matte finish to minimize glare, a glossy finish that intensifies the colors and adds depth to the photo, or semi-gloss, which makes the photo look almost like an oil painting.

Heck, you can even get an iridescent finish that makes the print come to life with a pearlescent effect.

In other words, choose your printing company carefully, because if you do, you'll end up with gorgeous, colorful prints. If not, well, you could be wildly disappointed!

### There's Just About Any Size of a Canvas Print

I have a pretty large entryway in my house that called for some large artwork. I chose to get some canvas

prints of my son for that space, and it was definitely a good choice. The colors of the canvas really pop against the neutral-colored walls, and as you walk by each print, you can see the texture of the canvas, which enhances the viewing experience.

You can order all sorts of sizes of prints, too. I chose something in the middle-of-the-road range, but you can get something petite like an 8x10 for a smaller display area or you can get something like a massive 40x60 print to create a truly eye-popping display in a large room.

No matter how large you print your canvas, as long as you opt for a top-notch printer like CanvasHQ, you'll have something that makes your photos sing, brings memories to life, and gives your room a touch of elegance all at the same time.

For my money, there's just nothing like a high quality Canvas print!

## Five Mistakes Killing Your Landscape Photos



Landscapes can be among the most emotive and beautiful of all photographs if shot well. The problem is that landscape photography is not easy and a bad landscape will just look like a regular snapshot rather than a crafted image. Newcomers to landscape photography will often get frustrated with their results, perhaps to the point of giving up. However, there are some quite common and easily rectified mistakes that are often made.

Today we are going to take a look at five of them.

### Crooked Horizon

Nothing turns a potential great landscape into a snapshot easier than a crooked horizon. It's simple to make this mistake, especially when shooting from a tripod. Bending down to the viewfinder at an angle is a chief cause of this issue but the solution is simple and effective. Virtually all mod-

ern cameras can display a virtual horizon both on the LCD and often in the viewfinder. This is basically an electronic spirit level that shows the angle of the camera relative to the horizon. It is usually found among the display settings of your camera and is an invaluable tool. If for some reason your camera does not have this setting, get yourself a cheap, real photographic spirit level. They are virtually infalli-

ble.

## Lifeless Sky

The sky is often an integral part of a great landscape. It defines our composition and provides visual balance to the land or sea in front of us. It's also one of the easiest things to get wrong. The chief mistake is shooting in a cloudless sky or over-exposing the sky to make it lifeless.

Skies can feel lifeless when there is no definition in them. This could be a flat dull overcast sky but equally it can be a clear sky with little or no clouds. When we combine this with an exposure dedicated to the foreground, we often get washed out dull skies.

There are a couple of solutions to this. First is to shoot when the weather is giving some nice definition to the sky. This can be white fluffy clouds in the day, high cirrus clouds at dawn or dusk or dark stormy clouds at any time of day. The second and complimentary solution is to use graduated neutral density filters to hold back the exposure of the sky and add more definition.

## Flat Lighting

Along with a lifeless sky, flat dull lighting can also ruin a potentially good landscape. Typical causes of this are overcast days and shooting in or around the middle of the day. An overcast day acts like a giant soft box, eliminating all shadows. This in turn

removes any definition and depth from the scene.

Shooting in the middle of the day has the opposite effect to an overcast day. The strong sunlight creates harsh shadows removing detail from the shadow areas.

The best times to shoot landscapes are during the blue and golden hours where the light is clean and provides soft detailed shadows. If you cannot shoot at these times then your best option is to use a polarising filter for sunny days or shoot with black and white in mind for overcast days.

## Lack of Depth

One of the defining elements of a great landscape is the way it leads your eye into and around the image. Its called depth and its often something newcomers miss when shooting. Perhaps more than any other type of photo, a landscape is trying to represent a 3 dimensional scene in a 2 dimensional image.

We can achieve depth in various ways. One of the most common is simply to shoot in great light. The golden hour mentioned above will give you beautifully defined shadows that you can use to lead the eye through the image. Another common technique is to use leading lines as a compositional tool. Here we use natural elements in the image such as a road or a line or rocks to pull the viewer eye through the shot and towards

the point of interest.

## No Point of Interest

Last but not least is the aforementioned point of interest. A beautiful scene can fool us into believing it will make a great shot. When we look at a scene our eyes have the advantage of being able to look around at all the elements in front and surrounding that scene. When we translate that to an image our viewers lose that ability. They have to look at our two dimensional representation of that scene. For this reason having a point of interest, a focal subject is vital to a good landscape. This might be a small cottage in the distance or a large hay bale in the foreground. Whatever it is, there needs to be something the eye will end up on as it journeys through the shot. That something must be interesting, beautifully lit and hopefully tell the story of the shot.

Shooting landscapes is a wonderful genre of photography. What could be better than standing in beautiful light shooting a stunning scene? Sometimes however the results are not as good as the expectations. By checking for the five issues we have mentioned here, you should be able to see what is going to work and what is not.



SHOOTING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY HAS THE OPPOSITE EFFECT TO AN OVERCAST DAY.



## Controlling Lighting

There are two primary reasons to try all different kinds of photography. One is to improve your chops. The other

is to find out what each kind of photography is like to do and whether it's for you.

When I took studio lighting in

school, I wasn't very interested in it. There were several reasons for this. One is that I don't like photographing

# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Controlling Lighting (continued)



what I can't see. I disliked all my experiments with flash for this reason. Somewhere, I have a set of pairs of pictures I used as teaching tools, of different scenes or subjects, identical except that one was taken with on-camera flash and the other with available light. I didn't like taking pictures with flash, for the simple reason that I didn't know what the result was going to look like.

The other reason is that control doesn't appeal to me. The opposite—serendipity—appeals to me much more. I want to explore with a camera and be surprised by what I find—adapt on the fly to what I see.

Lots of people, however, love the control aspect of photography. There's nothing wrong with that if it appeals to you.

I mentioned recently that I once was a full-time assistant for a studio pro for six months. I learned a lot in that time. My boss was a total control freak when it came to his pictures, and for very good reason—his sets and models cost money, and hence, unpleasant surprises or technical breakdowns or delays cost money.

One little story about him (I won't name him—he was so difficult to work for that one of his former assistants had T-shirts made for all the other assistants in town that said "I Survived \_\_\_\_.") He once had to shoot a brochure for a travel company. One of the pictures he wanted to take was

an overhead view of a man and a woman in bathing suits floating on air rafts in a swimming pool. They would be facing opposite ways, holding hands in the middle, and each would be holding a drink in the other hand. He rented a scaffold, hired the models, devised his lighting scheme, found a swimming pool painted the right color of blue, etc.

To assure himself he could get the brilliant effect of sunlight on water, he rented an indoor pool and lit it with artificial light. But there was a problem—the lights couldn't reach the bottom of the pool. He threw all the watt-seconds he could at it, but the light couldn't penetrate the water with sufficient intensity. So he had to switch to an outdoor pool. But it drove him up the wall that his shoot was dependent on sunlight. Never mind the fact that it had been sunny for a month and there was nothing but sun in the forecast—he just hated having to rely on God rather than Speedotron for the lighting for his shot. Everything went fine, the day of the shoot was sunny, and he got the shot. But he complained for a long time afterwards about not having been in control.

There's nothing wrong with having ironfisted control of every aspect of the shots you want to make, including your lighting. I will freely admit that my long-ago boss, the studio photographer control freak, probably made more money from sales of photographs in one year than I have made in my

entire career. His was a true Mom-and-Pop business — he did the shooting and oversaw the technical stuff, and his wife did the books and ran the business side of things. They had a 50-foot sailboat, if that's any indication of their success.

As for me...well, one of my favorite lighting situations was shooting a portrait of a friend. There was a north-facing window in the attic of a garage at my grandparents' summer cottage. There were old sheets covering disused furniture in the attic and I used one of them as a reflector. It was hot as hell and I wanted her to wear a particular sweater I thought she looked great in because its green-gray color matched her green-gray eyes. She did, but the "sweater" in this case was literal—it made her sweat! Windowlight on one side, a large sheet hung on the other side, her tanned skin glistening, and the dark rafters of the garage making the background all but black—the light was utterly gorgeous. But it was all completely improvised as I went along.

We all need to know what our own character and personality is. And it's best to go ahead and go with that.

Anyway, all I wanted to say today is that the best way to play around with lighting on a small scale are probably portraits, still life (that's the plural of "a still life"), or macro shots. Start by finding examples you might want to emulate.

**WE ALL NEED TO KNOW WHAT OUR OWN CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY IS. AND IT'S BEST TO GO AHEAD AND GO WITH THAT.**



## Common Mistakes in Making Photographs

I know what you're thinking. Beginner photographers can make way more than five mistakes when they take photos. And while that might be true, the five mistakes I outline below are among the most common - and the easiest to fix.

### Using the Built-In Flash

Whether it's the pop-up flash on your DSLR or the flash on your phone's camera, using these harsh light sources is a bad plan. The light emitted from a built-in flash is extremely bright. That blows out the highlights of your photos and creates harsh, dark shadows in the shot as well. All that contrast and dynamic range makes for an ugly photo...

Instead, try to find ways to use natural light. You can do that by shooting outdoors during Golden Hour when the sun's light is soft and warm.

If you're shooting indoors, utilize natural light coming through windows to help light your subject. To soften it, diffuse the light with a sheer curtain or a plain white sheet.

You can also use a reflector to bounce light onto your subject both indoors and out, resulting in more even lighting.

For whatever reason, I see a lot of beginner photographers shooting their photos in JPG mode. Back in the day, photographers sometimes used JPG mode to save space on memory cards. Since JPGs are compressed files, you could fit more of them onto a card than a RAW file. However, memory cards have such enormous

capacity these days that there's really no reason to continue shooting in JPGs.

All that compression of the image file means that you have less data to work with in post-processing, so instead of handicapping yourself with JPGs, shoot in RAW so you can work some magic in Photoshop, Lightroom, and so forth.

### Standing Still

Another common beginner photography mistake is to simply stand in one spot and press the shutter button.

Not only will this result in boring photos, but it hinders your ability to get creative with different perspectives and shooting angles.

Instead of standing up straight and taking your photos from your eye level, kneel down, sit down, squat down or even lay down on the ground to find more interesting angles from which to shoot.

Additionally, actually move around the subject to see if there's a better perspective to take the photo. Just moving a few feet in one direction or the other can help you capitalize on better light, an improved shape, or it could help you eliminate a distracting element in the background.

### Using the Wrong Lens

If you're using a 24mm wide-angle lens for portraits or a 400mm lens for landscapes, you're only making things more difficult for yourself.

This isn't to say that you can't ever use a wide-angle

lens for portraits or a telephoto lens for landscapes, but there are better choices.

Some beginners are die-hard zoom lens fans, and while zooms do offer a degree of focal length flexibility that prime lenses cannot, they're also not as sharp as prime lenses, they're bigger and bulkier than primes, and they're often more expensive, too.

If you're just starting out and all you have is your kit lens, which is usually an 18-55mm zoom, the first lens you should buy is a 50mm. These lenses are easy to use, versatile, and inexpensive. Add to that their incredible sharpness and great performance in low-light, and you have the makings of a great all-around lens.

### Relying on Free Editing Programs

I get that plunking down a bunch of cash for a program like Photoshop isn't everyone's cup of tea. However, there's a reason that such programs are for sale and not free — they are packed with incredible tools that allow you to perfect your images.

Now, they aren't the only two options for post-processing, but Photoshop and Lightroom are certainly the cream of the crop.

If you insist on using a free photo editor, there's nothing better than GIMP, which looks and functions a lot like Photoshop, but without the price tag.



**JUST MOVING A FEW FEET IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER CAN HELP YOU CAPITALIZE ON BETTER LIGHT, OR IMPROVE SHAPE, OR HELP ELIMINATE A DISTRACTING ELEMENT IN THE BACKGROUND.**





CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA

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

Camera Club Central Minnesota  
101 12th Ave. S  
Sartell, MN 56377

Newsletter Editor  
Richard D. Heath  
rheath@tds.net

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](mailto:rheath@tds.net).

## Your Photography Portfolio (continued)

### Final Thoughts

If you're not pleased with the results you're getting with your photography, the chances are good that you're just making a couple of simple mistakes, like those I've outlined above.

The key is to be patient, take time to practice and learn, and be diligent about identifying what's going wrong and taking steps to fix it. Beginner photographers can make way more than five mistakes when they take photos.



## My Passion for Photography

*What follows is a note sent into a photography magazine concerning a person's loss of interest in photography.*

=====

Why is it so hard for us to stay inspired in photography? This is something that has challenged me for a long time — and I think I've discovered some of the solutions and secrets for myself. I hope some of my experiences can also help empower you.

### The Will to Photograph

First of all, what gives us the will, the drive, the motivation, or the inspiration to make a photograph?

We see something that sparks some sort of interest, excitement, or joy in our eyes. This can be seeing some sort of geometrical shape or arrangement that excites you. This can be a face that interests you. It can be a moment that is personally meaningful to you, or it can be a memory that you want to document and immortalize for yourself.

### The 3 Solutions

Now as of 2018, I feel reborn. No more genre in photography. No more strict rules

on myself. No more obsession over social media and likes, comments, and followers.

This is what has helped reinspire myself in photography, and has helped make photography fun for myself after 10 years of shooting.

### Posting my photos to my own blog, not on social media:

One of the best things I've ever done for my creativity, self-esteem, focus, and innovation was to delete my Instagram.

This has helped empower me because I don't care about the single photo so much anymore.

### Just shooting whatever interests me:

I just photograph everything now. It was like when I was a beginner. I photographed everything, with no concern about genre.

### Shooting with neck strap, in program mode:

Honestly this has helped me the most — always having the camera around my neck, and using a camera that has an integrated popup flash, just using program mode, ISO 800-1600, center point autofocus.

