

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

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August 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.

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

<http://cameraclubmn.com>

Assignments

Monday August 6, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104, National, State, or Local Park – spend a day or part of a day photographing. Select five photos.

Monday September 3, 2018, Mississippi Community Room 106 at 7:00pm, State, county fair, local celebration or carnival.

Monday October 1, 2018, Mississippi Community Room 106, Wildlife: This could be something as small as a dragonfly or much larger.

Monday November 5, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104, Environment: Fall Colors



Inside this issue:

CLUB MEETING AND OTHER BITS OF INFORMATION	1
WHY PHOTOGRAPHERS SHOULD HAVE A BLOG	1
THING SUCCESSFUL PHOTOGRAPHERS DON'T DO	2
SHUTTER SPEED AND APERTURE	3
HOW TO CHECK AND CORRECT AUTOFOCUS	5

Why Photographers Should Have a Blog

When it comes to a photographer's online presence we tend to think of social media platforms like Instagram or Facebook — or YouTube for those who create videos on a regular basis. It seems, though, that the lowly blog sometimes gets overlooked.

In internet terms, blogging is old school. There will always be new, exciting social media outlets that pop up — some will last, many won't. But blogging, in all its basic glory, still represents a valuable tool for photographers.

If you've been thinking about starting a blog, here are 6 reasons why you shouldn't delay any longer.

1. Build A More Intimate Audience

Social media possesses an inherent cool-factor. Trends prevail, follower count often matters more than skill, and everyone wants to portray themselves as living their "best life." Lost in the fray is authenticity.

While the "like for like" and "follow for follow" philosophy pervades social media, a

blog allows you to post your work and feel a bit more sure that those who follow you are following you because they really value what you're doing.

Furthermore, if you're looking for more depth in the way of comments you're more likely to get that on a blog than you are on a social media site where approval can be signified by a heart or a thumb.

I have found that people are more inclined to leave longer, more nuanced comments on a blog. Even if it's only two or three individuals, you can develop those into meaningful relationships.

2. Share Your Work Your Way

Blogging allows you a level of creative freedom not available on popular social media and photo sharing sites, where you're generally confined to pretty strict format. Of course, there's a good reason for this, but if you're itching to break out of that mould then starting your own blog is the answer.



The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Having a Blog (continued)



TO BE SURE, YOU CAN FIND INSPIRATIONAL WORK ANYWHERE... BUT A BLOG WILL BE A MORE EFFECTIVE STAGE.

You can include text and video, place numerous photos in one post, and arrange everything the way you want. If you want even more customization, most blogging platforms allow the use of HTML code.

Getting a blog post ready takes a bit more work than posting a photo on Instagram, but I do believe it's worth the effort. The end result is a comprehensive presentation that can reveal the true depth of your work.

3. Expand Your Creativity

Photo sharing sites too often inspire sameness. When users join a given photo sharing outlet, it's not uncommon for them to start emulating whatever look is prevalent there in an attempt to stay relevant.

A blog, however, might encourage you to experiment more as you're not racing against a trend. When you try something new you will want to share it. When you don't have the pressure of social media/photo sharing site

working against you, you will feel empowered to continue to try new things.

4. Inspire Others

Your blog should be a reflection of your craft in ways that most social media sites don't allow for. Because a blog affords you the opportunity to be more personal, you also have a greater capacity to inspire others.

To be sure, you can find inspirational work anywhere, but if it's the width and breadth of a photographer's experience that breeds inspiration, a blog will be a more effective stage.

5. Stick To Your Own Standards

If you regularly post photos deemed NSFW or produce any other type of content that would run afoul of a social media site's "community standards," you're going to need a blog to get your work out there.

You can certainly post your

risqué imagery on a site like Instagram, but you will have to censor it. If you're anti-censorship, getting your own blog is a no-brainer.

6. Assess Your Growth

Blogs are sort of like time capsules (assuming they are updated on a regular basis) in the sense that you can track your progress across various periods.

Go back to the first photos you posted and ask yourself if you still like them? What technical deficiencies do they exhibit? How strong of a story do they tell? If you included text, what were your thoughts at the time? What are your thoughts on the same topic now?

A blog is an excellent means of self-analysis.

Final Thoughts

Obviously, the ideas listed above represent only a small portion of all the reasons a photographer might find value in blogging.

Things Successful Photographers Don't Do

When you read articles on photography sites like this one, by and large, those articles tell you what you should be doing. But there's value in understanding what not to do as well...

Darren Miles offers up some insights into that very topic. As an experienced pro in wedding photography, portraiture, family photography, and real estate photography, he knows what he's talking about.

For his list of five things successful photographers don't do, read below for a blow-by-blow of each point Darren makes.

Don't Put Just Any Image on Your Website

These days, many of your clients, perhaps most of them, will get the first view of your photography when they visit your website.

That being the case, the photos you put on your

website need to be spectacular.

That's not just the first photo or the first handful of photos, either. Every single image you have on your website needs to be technically sound, show your personal aesthetic, be composed perfectly...you get the point.

You only get one chance at a good first impression, so curate your website images and be sure you're only put-



ting forward your very best work.

The first step in having a great photography website is in the domain name you choose. With a .pics or .photo domain from Uniregistry, you can set yourself up for success with a photography-specific domain that shows just how professional you are. Check out .pics and .photo domain names for your website today.

Critical Mistakes You're Making With Your Photography Website

What is (and Isn't) Important for Growing Your Photography Business. Don't Make Your Clients Wait Forever for Their Images, Since photography is a service industry, you need to not only be a great photographer, but a great business person as well.

And part of that is getting images and photography products to your clients in a timely fashion.

Obviously the timeline for each job might vary - you can process and print images from an hour-long family portrait session much quicker than you can from a wedding.

But either way, you need to establish a timeline with your client regarding when they can expect their images, and stick to that timeline so they get what they pay for sooner rather than later.

Don't Ask "What Were Your Settings?"

In photography, the camera settings you use are dependent upon the situation. That is, there isn't one magic combination of settings that will get you a well-exposed image every single time. Yet, new photographers often ask more experienced photographers, "What were your settings for that photo?"

Though there's something to be said for trying to learn from more experienced photographers, this question won't get you anywhere. The best approach is to practice - a lot and dial in settings that are appropriate to each different situation you encounter.

Don't Spend a Lot of Time Trying to Impress Other Photographers

Other photographers don't pay your bills, your clients do. So, if you're going to spend time and energy trying to impress anyone, make it your clients!

It's nice to have some street credibility with other photographers, and it's a good ego boost to have others in your profession look to you as a dynamite photographer. But in the end, as long as your clients are happy with the images you take, that's what truly matters.

Don't Obsess Over Gear

GAS - is a very real thing for

many photographers.

They mistakenly believe that if they get an expensive camera with a bunch of expensive lenses that they'll suddenly be a better photographer. And though I fully admit that a Nikon D850 is a better photography tool than a smartphone, in the end, they're both just tools photographers use to get a job done.

In reality, the best gear you have is you! Your creative eye, your understanding of composition and lighting, and your understanding of how to use the gear you have is what's really important.

As Darren notes in, a good exercise is to go to a photography website like Flickr and find groups centered around a specific camera or lens that you own.

Then have a look at the images in those groups to see what's possible and get inspired to use the gear you already have.

It's a great way to stop lusting after new gear and focus instead on maximizing your ability to use the photography tools you already have to create awesome photos.



IF YOU'RE GOING TO SPEND TIME AND ENERGY TRYING TO IMPRESS ANYONE, MAKE IT YOUR CLIENTS!



Shutter Speed and Aperture

The way I see it, any form of photography consists of two components: science and art. Today we look briefly at shutter speed and aperture, two of the most important components of your camera

gear and see how to use them.

One of the key technical components in photography is the famous Exposure Triangle. While the Exposure triangle

helps us understand the technical side of shutter/aperture and ISO, I want to look at shutter and aperture from the art perspective of things. What do they mean for the artist in you? How

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Shutter Speed and Aperture (continued)



IF YOU'VE SEEN SHOTS OF MILKY, SMOOTH WATERFALLS OR RIVERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS CLICK THEM AT REALLY SLOW SHUTTER SPEEDS.

can you use them to give some visual appeal to your images? Let's take a look.

Shutter

The shutter is primarily responsible of allowing light onto the camera sensor for a finite amount of time. At least that's what the science of photography tells us. But in the hands of a photographer who likes his or her art, it functions as a tool to depict and freeze motion. I've seen a lot of people use super-high shutter speeds to freeze motion in the frame. For example. It is what comes to mind first when you see something moving. Arrest that movement!

Fast Shutter Speed for Freezing Motion

There's no doubt that it makes for a pleasing frame and you often need a fast shutter speed to capture the moment. But there are times when motion is depicted even better with a slow shutter speed.

Slow Shutter Speed for Blurred Motion

The camera can capture the movement of animals at a much slower shutter speed than it generally does. It certainly tells you that the subject and it gives a different feel to the image. The next time you see a subject walking or running, try a slow shutter speed and see what you get.

The key is to move the camera at the same speed as the subject. Here are

the steps that I follow:

- Set up the camera in Tv/S mode and dial a slow shutter speed.
- Fire a test shot.
- Ensure that the image is not getting overexposed by checking for blown highlights and adjust the ISO, if needed.
- Wait for the subject and start focus tracking before you want to click it.
- Once you have locked focus on the subject, keep moving your camera to keep the subject on the selected focus point.
- Click when the subject is at about a 90-degree angle to you or just before... that's when you get the most pleasing results.

I advise that you start somewhere around 1/50th for a shutter speed and work your way around to a shutter speed that works best for the situation.

If you are into landscape photography, slow shutter speeds are a norm as most images occur when the light is at its softest. And where in landscape photography do we depict motion most often? Yes... you guessed it correctly. Water. If you've seen shots of milky, smooth waterfalls or rivers, photographers click them at really slow shutter speeds.

Aperture

There is a notion among many budding photographers that aperture priority is the best mode to use. In my

conversations, I often ask "Why is this so?" More often than not I get vague responses.

Many wildlife photographers use aperture priority because of the control it gives with respect to the blurring of foreground and background. Others use it and never change the aperture to anything other than wide-open. For those of you who are new to the concept, aperture is used to control the amount of light coming into the camera at any given time (science) and it is the component that lets you control the blurring of foreground and background. It can help you isolate the subject and keep everything in focus. In books, you often find it under the heading DoF (Depth of Field).

An aperture value of approximately f/4 (smaller number in the denominator) helps you isolate the subject.

Wide Aperture for narrow DOF

If you know elephants and the way they walk when approaching a waterhole, you know that they must line up at some point. One photographer had the aperture setting at max-open which gives the most amount of blur. Even though the elephants were very close to each other, he could depict the first one in extremely sharp focus compared to the others. This is due to the aperture value. It gives the frame a story and it helps you better depict your art.

Narrow DOF with Wide Aperture

The aperture is also a fantas-



tic tool to creatively use the foreground. By using the foreground in the image on the left, it gives a natural frame to the subject, drawing a viewer's attention to it. It is a different take and one that gives a tad more punch to the image.

The Amount of Blur

The effect in the image above is because of a wide-open aperture which renders only the subject in focus and rest is blurred away. While doing this and wanting to achieve blurring, remember that the

amount of blur is directly proportional to the following:

How close you are to the subject (the closer you are, the shallower the area in focus)

How distance between the subject and the background (an elephant and an eagle, for example. The eagle has a nicer blur)

A wider aperture gives more blur. For example, $f/2.8$ gives more blur than $f/8$.

There are situations in wildlife photography when using a wide open aperture is actual-

ly detrimental.

Controlling your blur with Aperture

An image shot at $f/4$ resulted in a blurred tail for the subject. This image needed a higher aperture number to get the entire bird in focus. So next time you are out in the field think about how you can creatively use shutter speed and aperture to capture stunning wildlife photos.



How to Check and Correct Autofocus

It's time to sharpen up your pix. Modern DSLRs generally rely on what's called phase difference autofocusing: basically, a rangefinder scheme updated with new technology. This technology uses a second optical path within the camera, independent of the lens-to-sensor path used to make the photo.

Well, when there are two of anything, they'll never be identical—excepting protons, electrons, and other elementary particles! Given manufacturing tolerances and the routine punishment you visit on your camera, it's possible that these two paths are slightly different. Sure, your autofocus oughta focus. But it could be off.

Manufacturers are aware of this problem and often give you a way to “tune” or “microadjust” the autofocus. The adjustment is generally buried among endless camera menus, but a quick web search will tell you if your equipment has this capability.

Some readers are always keen to get the best technical performance from their gear, so if tuning up your DSLR's autofocus is possible, why not? You can find plenty of accessories—ranging from \$5 to \$60 and more—that will help. But before you go to trouble and expense, here's a way to swiftly determine whether you've really got a problem.

Think about it: How can you know if your autofocus is really producing the crispest image? You could just tape a newspaper to the wall, make a photo (using autofocus), and see if it's sharp. Better yet, have a range of targets and see which is most sharp, so that, in case the autofocus is off, you'll know whether your camera is focusing too near or too far.

The simple way to do this is to spread that newspaper on the floor and shoot it from an angle—say, from a tripod five or 10 feet away. One of the lines of type is going to

be sharp, and if it's not where you focused—well, start digging in those camera menus.

Just lay it down at a distance from your camera that's roughly 25 to 50 times the lens focal length.

Click on the image to view a full resolution version of the autofocus test target.

I chose to test my Nikkor 85mm $f/1.8$ lens, which I often use for portraiture. Autofocus for longer lenses is more critical, given their shallow depth of field.

I laid the target about eight feet in front of my tripod, which was tilted downward so that my camera's field of view was centered on the rectangle. Starting with my lens grossly out of focus, I activated autofocus. When it was locked in, I took several shots.

A few caveats: This procedure works best for fixed-focus lenses, although you

YOU COULD JUST
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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.

Autofocus (continued)

can certainly try with your zooms. Be sure your camera is solidly mounted and take care to trip the shutter with either a cable release or the self-timer. Shoot with your lens wide open, and have plenty of light on the target. This last point is important.

I didn't expect much of a problem from my trusty Nikon D300. After all, it's as reliable as doggy love. But when I inspected my test images, I was stunned—yes, stunned—to see that the sharpest target lines were about three inches beyond where I had focused! I sank into my easy chair, swallowed a Valium, and contemplated the meaning of life.

After that, I consulted my user manual (not an easy thing for a male) and figured out how to fine-tune the autofocus for this lens. Not hard, but slightly different for every camera.

Is this a big deal? After all, it was only about a 3% error, and inconsequential in most shooting situations because depth of field would more than hide it. But when you're working in low light at long focal lengths—not an uncommon circumstance—you might be thankful to have spent the hour or two it takes to check things out, and possibly give your camera a tune-up.

