

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

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December 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 December 3, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104, Holiday Gathering: Submit five photos of the year and we will put them together into a slide show. Send them to jbregan063@gmail.com

Monday January 7, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, assignment to be announced.

Monday February 4, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, assignment to be announced.

Monday March 4, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, assignment to be announced.



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Better Autumn Photography

Autumn is a beautiful time of year, and most photographers love to get out and capture the season's gorgeous light and colors. However, with shortened days and erratic weather it can be a bit challenging to photograph in the fall. To help you get you out and shooting, here are five tips to improve your autumn photography:

Vary Your Shots

Autumn being a season of change, the weather conditions can vary drastically. One day it's warm and sunny, and the next it might get foggy and cold. And before you know it, it can turn back to cloudy and moody. With so many different weather conditions, you have the opportunity to shoot a wide variety of images within a small window of time.

You can also vary the way you compose your shots. Either go wide and capture the colorful and misty environment or isolate a leaf by shooting from a closer range. You can even shoot high to show the sun breaking through the trees, or shoot a dramatic low shot if

there is some mist or fog on the ground.

Add Human Interest

Adding human interest to show the interaction of living beings with nature is a great way to make a photo more interesting. While it's not always necessary, it can do wonders to uplift a boring image. Try having someone play with the autumn leaves, or walk down a path with colorful trees in the background.

Scout Out Your Location

Location scouting is something that you can do anytime when you're traveling. If you happen to come across a tree that's changing colors, you can have a look around the location and get a sense of lighting in that area. Then revisit the location when the lighting is best.

Check Sunset Times

Golden hour is a great time to shoot during any time of the year. But it gets even more special during autumn. Soft light helps in accentuating the varying colors of the leaves.



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Better Autumn Photography (continued)

Even the sky pulls out dramatic colors during autumn, making it a dream come true for photographers.

However, as the sun starts setting earlier in autumn, be aware of the sunset timing. This will help you to be at the location a bit earlier and plan out the shot. Also, keep in mind that the area where the sun sets in summer starts to change in autumn. You need to be aware of the sunset location if you really want to nail your sunset shot.



And when it comes to sunrise, it happens at a more “reasonable” time. While the sun rises super early during summer, it waits until a more doable time in autumn so you can sleep in a little and still get great shots.

Adjust HSL

HSL stands for Hue Saturation Luminance. This tip is more concerned with editing colors, and HSL can make a huge difference in

this regard. For instance, if you have a photo of a tree with brown leaves and you want to make it look more golden, you can tweak the hue adjustment. If you haven’t tried it yet, try using the HSL adjustments a bit and see for yourself how it can bring out the colors in your photos.

I hope these tips will be of help if you’re planning to explore the beauty of autumn with photography.

**CIRCULAR
POLARIZING
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IN YOUR SCENE.**

Colors in Landscape Photos

When it comes to colors in nature, landscape photographers have a unique opportunity to get the colors right whether it’s in camera or in post processing. There are several ways to make sure we can achieve the proper colors in landscape photography that suits the image and has an overall pleasing effect that will enhance our scenes.

I personally love color photography. The colors are what speak to me while out in nature. Getting the colors right for my final image is important to me.

There are a few ways you can photograph your nature scenes to get it right in camera. By doing so you may not have to do much in post processing to be happy with the results of your photograph.

Check the Weather

Weather and lighting play a very important part in nature photography. Depending on the scene involved with your

photograph you have in mind, be sure and plan accordingly. I have found that even shooting trees during a recent rain on a cloudy day can really enhance the colors of the leaves.

Another example is if you are photographing waterfalls you may want to plan to shoot on an overcast or rainy day. Sometimes these are the best conditions to photographing waterfalls for bringing out the colors in the surrounding foliage.

Using Filters

Circular Polarizing filters can enhance the colors already in your scene. I use them for cutting glare particularly on water but also to bring out the colors more as it can make the colors richer.

Check Your Histogram

Make sure to check your histogram to properly expose your image. It can be

difficult to bring out the colors you see in the scene if your image is too dark. Always have the histogram handy to view when setting up your photograph.

Getting Colors Right in Post Processing

Photographers hear it all the time, “Is that Photoshopped?” I believe we get this question all the time because the general public that doesn’t have experience with photographing nature. They take the picture with a point and shoot camera or their smart phones. Shooting like that means they are letting the camera determine what the colors should be. The photos often may look either too dark because the dynamic range in those cameras often are not great or the colors may look unrealistic. They have come a long way however over the years and some of them do a much better job than others.

Photographers often shoot in



raw so they can manipulate the image if needed in programs like Lightroom and Photoshop during post processing. The raw image allows us to bring out those colors more like we saw while out shooting the scene. Sometimes it even means desaturation of the image as the colors may be way to brilliant to make an overall beautiful photo.

Adjusting Saturation and Vibrancy

There are ways you can enhance your images during post processing which I will highlight below.

You could always move the sliders in Lightroom to achieve this. It may or may not be needed, but adding a little might just do it.

I sometimes do a little dodge or burning in Photoshop to make the colors a little more brilliant. More like what I saw with my eyes out in the field. When dodging or burning areas of your photograph, you don't necessarily need to use the default black or

white. You can use the color picker to choose a color within the photo to bring in more or less of a color within the scene.

To do this, open your photo in Photoshop. Create a layer to burn or dodge. The black would be to burn, the white to dodge.

For this example, I'm choosing to burn. You will need to click on the foreground color arrow to switch it from black or white. Default should be black. If so you are set. To burn, click on the black square in the bottom left. This will bring up the Color Picker (Foreground Color).

Brush Tool in Photoshop where you can change the size and hardness.

Use the dropper to choose a color from your image. You can then dial it in by moving it around within the Color Picker. Once a color is chosen, you can use the Brush Tool to paint onto your scene where you feel it's appropriate. I wanted to bring out the colors

more in my clouds that I remember happening at the time I took the photo. Move the brush in a circular motion. Choose the brush size, hardness, and opacity. You may need to open a couple of layers to get the desired effect you want.

Example of colors in a landscape photo after post processing

Maybe the color isn't exactly right on your screen, as you've remembered it in the field. You can adjust the color temperature in Lightroom or Photoshop to bring it closer to what you've envisioned. I find that sometimes warming up or choosing to cool down the scene a bit can get me the desired effect I want with my colors.

I'm sure there are other ways to get your colors right in your nature photography images but I hope these few tips will get you started in thinking about ways to change them to your liking.



SOMETIMES YOU CAN DO A LITTLE DODGE OR BURNING TO MAKE THE COLORS A LITTLE MORE BRILLIANT.

How to Use Hyperfocal Focusing

There seem to be a lot of misconceptions out there when it comes to critical focusing for scenes with lots of depth. I'd like to discuss hyperfocal focusing and dispel the myths I commonly hear about how to attain maximum depth of field for any given scene.

Let me first define what hyperfocal focusing is and why we would consider using it. Hyperfocal focusing allows one to utilize the maximum range of focus in any given composition, from the first

element one desires to be sharp in the near portion of the scene to the furthest element (often times infinity), considering the following predetermined factors: sensor size (full or cropped sensor), lens focal setting, aperture and distance to subject.

Simply put, a hyperfocal app like Focal from Essence Computing which will calculate the closest distance at which a lens can be focused while keeping objects at infinity sharp. When the lens is focused at this dis-

tance, all objects at distances from approximately half of the resulting hyperfocal distance out to infinity will be acceptably sharp.

"Acceptably" sharp is based on what looks sharp to the human eye when holding an 8x10-inch print at arm's length. For example, if I had a composition where the closest element in my scene that I wanted to be sharp was 6 feet away, and I desired sharp focus to infinity, then the range of



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How to Use Hyperfocal Focusing... (continued)



acceptable focus would be 3 feet (half of 6) to infinity. This begs for one more term you may not be familiar with: “circle of confusion.” In optics, a circle of confusion is an optical spot caused by a cone of light rays from a lens not coming to a perfect focus when imaging a point source.

Today there are plenty of smartphone apps that allow for one to input the above factors and easily calculate where the hyperfocal distance resides. The main problem for landscape shooters, especially those who work around the fringes of the day when light is changing rapidly, is that apps won't allow for fast calculations. If you miss the light, you will miss the shot. My advice is to frame your scene while on a tripod and run your hyperfocal calculations prior to the extraordinary light arriving.

Dispelling Hyperfocal Focusing Myths

Before proceeding forward with how to calculate hyperfocal distance, let me first dispel two myths that I hear and read about on the web.

The first myth says to focus one-third into your scene. If I were to have focused one-third into my scene, that would have been roughly between the foreground and say mountains in the background. Unless I wanted the foreground to become out-of-focus distractions, that theory simply would not have worked.

The second myth says to focus one-third of the way up the plane of your focus. In other words, envision an imaginary

tic-tac-toe (rule-of-thirds) grid over your viewfinder (your camera may allow you to already add this as an overlay) and focus on whatever elements intersect the bottom horizontal line. Here's the problem: If some foreground elements were short and did not reach that line, one might look for another element intersecting this line that lies further into the scene and causes the tiny elements that are closer to the lens to be out of focus. So, we must use some common sense if subscribing to this way of focusing for maximum depth.

Lens & Sensor Considerations

With a full-frame 35mm camera (either DSLR or mirrorless), a 50mm lens is roughly equivalent to how we humans see the world. Any focal length less than 50mm starts to trend toward wide angle, and any focal length greater than 50mm starts to trend toward telephoto. Due to the optics of the lens, wide-angle lenses allow for greater depth-of-field while telephotos allow for less. The further away you get from 50mm on either side, the more (or less) depth of field you will have, regardless of the chosen aperture.

Sensor size also plays an important role in determining depth of field for a given lens. A full frame sensor will allow for more depth-of-field for any given lens while a cropped (APS-C) sensor will not alter depth-of-field, even though

the overall reach of the lens will be more. Note that APS-C sensors will not change the bokeh of a given scene, it will just crop the scene for any given focal length tighter in camera, the same as if you cropped an image on your computer; this is important to remember in terms of depth of field. Any hyperfocal app will automatically take this into account when calculating the hyperfocal distance. This is why the first step when using any hyperfocal app is to specify your camera.

Hyperfocal Focusing & Aperture

Another piece of the puzzle is the aperture you choose. With any lens, either wide or telephoto, the smaller the aperture, the more depth of field one will get with any chosen lens. Most lenses perform at their sharpest with an aperture range of $f/8$ to $f/11$. However, if I need to go to $f/16$, I don't hesitate. Furthermore, if I need even greater depth, I will use $f/22$.

There is a caveat with using these smaller apertures, and that is diffraction, which occurs when the light is bent to such an extreme using these small aperture openings that softer focus will result—especially out along the edges of the frame. In the real world, I never worry about using $f/16$ and will only go to $f/22$ if needed. Most images I shoot at $f/22$ are very sharp, and I can improve their sharpness further in post-processing.

In a previous image my focus point was just at the end of

DUE TO THE OPTICS OF THE LENS, WIDE ANGLE LENSES ALLOW FOR GREATER DEPTH-OF-FIELD WHILE TELEPHOTOS ALLOW FOR LESS.



the foreground grasses where they met the reflection pond. The resulting hyperfocal point, along with a small aperture of $f/16$, ensured that I was sharp from the nearest foreground grasses all the way to the distant peaks. I had tested my focus point prior to the alpenglow light arriving. When it did, I was confident I had the scene focused correctly, and that allowed me to shoot through the beautiful warm light bathing the peaks.

Through my 60-plus years of photography and observation, it has become clear to me that if something must be soft in the image, I'd rather it be elements that are further away from my lens—it looks more natural to the eye. If I miss the focus on the foreground but have a sharp background, the shot is usually ruined. Our visual system is attuned to gradual declines in either contrast or focus. If possible, I want to have all my elements sharp from front to back in my composition.

Using Hyperfocal Focusing Apps

What about the smartphone apps that I mentioned earlier? Using the Focal app as an example, I will walk you through how easy it is to use. There are plenty of apps available, and they all do the same thing.

The first step is to specify the camera you're using. For my

image, I will use my Nikon D300 (a non-full frame camera), so I entered that before I began.

The next step is to enter in the foreground subject distance. Remember, the rule of thumb is that you will get approximately one-half of the resulting hyperfocal distance sharp. The goal is to allow the app to find this number and make sure you see the exact range of focus from your nearest to furthest elements (this generally means infinity). In this scene, I focused 10 feet into the scene. The resulting hyperfocal distance was 6.19 feet, meaning the closest element in sharp focus in the scene was approximately half that number—in this case, 3.81 feet.

Apps like Focal can help determine settings for hyperfocal focusing

Screen shot from the Focal app by Essence Computing, used to help calculate focusing distance.

In the image composed at 30mm, I need the grasses sharp from 5 feet to infinity. As you can guess, if I focused 10 feet into the scene at $f/16$, my range of acceptable focus would be 3.81 feet to infinity. Perfect.

Because I only needed 5 feet, I have some “wobble room” if I could not get to

infinity. For example, I could focus as far as 25 feet into this scene and still have a range of 4.95 feet to infinity sharp. I would be just shy of the 5 feet I desired.

The bottom line is to always try focusing deeper into your scene if you are not getting to infinity. If you go beyond the minimum focus difference and still could not achieve infinity focus, then the next step would be to use a smaller aperture (in this case, switching from $f/16$ to $f/22$).

As mentioned earlier, as we move away from wide angle toward telephoto focal lengths, the depth of field decreases, regardless of the aperture. This is exactly what sports and wildlife shooters desire as they generally aim to have their subject sharp with out-of-focus foregrounds and backgrounds. This allows for the subject to really “pop” off the frame.

Like anything with photography, hyperfocal focusing takes practice. The cool thing is that you don't have to be on location to learn how to use it. I will experiment with different scenarios when I am relaxing or in a hotel room. The more you experiment, the more you will get comfortable when you do go out into the field. Eventually, with enough practice, you will be able to start predicting hyperfocal distances.



**IF SOMETHING MUST
BE SOFT IN THE
IMAGE, I'D RATHER
IT BE ELEMENTS THAT
ARE FURTHER AWAY
FROM THE LENS.**



Merry Christmas



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.

Lightroom Tricks and Shortcuts



Everyone's list of Lightroom tricks and shortcuts is a bit different and when I started to compile mine I wasn't 100% sure what they were exactly.

I will review my list of 7 essential Lightroom tricks that I use on a daily basis. These are placed in order of importance simply based off of how often I use them. Some of these are widely known and others I don't hear discussed very often – hopefully you aren't familiar with all of them and you're able to pick up a couple new ones that you can apply to your editing process moving forward.

7. Spot Removal Reselect

How often does Lightroom auto select an inaccurate area of your image to use as the basis for the spot removal tool? Happens to me all the time and if it happens to you, just hit the forward slash key '/'. This will tell Lightroom to make another selection – you can keep doing this until you're happy with the selection.

6. Increase Your Feather

Simply holding down the Shift key while simultaneously hitting either of the bracket ('[' or ']') keys, this will increase or decrease the size of the feather of your local adjustments brush. A super simple trick, but insanely useful!



5. Survey Mode

This is a great tip for landscape photography when you have many images that look seemingly identical: while in the library module, if you highlight say 9 images and select the 'N' key this will bring up the survey mode. This is a great way to figure out which

one is the keeper!

4. Shift Double-Click Slider

Not sure what the name of this trick is so I just made one up. While in the develop module, if you hold down the Shift key and double-click the sliders within the basic panel, Lightroom will automatically set that particular slider to what the "auto" setting should be. This is a great way to get an idea on one certain slider as opposed to hitting the actual auto button which will set all sliders to the "auto" setting.

3. Show Selected Mask Overlay

Not sure why Lightroom decided to make the "Show Selected Mask Overlay" checkbox so small, but if it drives you bananas trying to click this every time you want to see the mask you've applied, just hit the shortcut key 'O'.

2. Instagram Crop Shortcut

If you have an image in a landscape orientation and you want to crop it to the 4x5 aspect ratio for Instagram you'll notice that 4x5 for landscape orientation is different than 4x5 for portrait orientation which is what Instagram prefers. A quick way to make this adjustment is to use the shortcut key 'X'.

1. Before & After Key

This is a fairly popular trick and it's one that I use many times throughout the day. While in the develop module on a particular image you can select the backslash key '\ ' to show you what your image looked like before any edits were applied.