

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 11, Issue 1

January 2019

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 January 7, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, **Travel Photos**: show us some of the interesting places or things you did last year. They can be close at hand or travels to a distant state or country.

Monday February 4, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, **Very Little or Very Big**: use your imagination and look around you to find interesting scenes or items.

Monday March 4, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, **Color**: the color "Red" is suggested. It should be the dominant color or have a significant "Red" object in the photo.



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Travel Photography

Is there anything better than travel photography? Most of us enjoy travelling and we like to document what we see and experience during these travels.

This helps us to look back on these experiences later and enjoy the memories for years to come. Moreover, we do not stop with just taking photos, but we love to share them with friends and family, social media, or even submit them to a travel magazine or competition.

Travel photography is not about just creating snapshots or memories, but these images can create a lasting impression and make the viewers look at them twice if you put in a bit of effort and creativity into making more creative travel images.

We all know, as travellers, that each country or destination has its own history, landscape, culture, people and charm. Make sure you learn a bit about your destination before your travels, so you can plan your photography around capturing images that convey

the real spirit of that place from your own perspective.

Here are five tips that you can employ the next time you travel, so you can spice up your travel photography:

Pay Attention to Details:

When you are travelling to different places, keep in mind that each place is unique and there is something that always makes the location stand out from the rest.

For example, look for unique signs, architecture, cafes, historical places, colors, patterns, graffiti, abandoned places, clothing, food and anything around you that shows or defines the little details about your destination. Also, some places have night markets that are unique to that place – so go about photographing them.

Photograph the details that make the place unique and enjoy the experience by exploring. Bear in mind to not pressurise yourself in photographing all the details as it can be



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Travel Photograph (continued)

exhausting on you especially while travelling.

Think Differently

Travel photography requires patience. Don't hurry around just snapping photographs that everyone else shoots – get off the tourist tracks and locations and explore, also, depending on where you are, making sure that you are in a safe area.

Think and act differently by walking around your location – if you are photographing landscapes, famous landmarks, cityscapes, etc. find the best perspective and light to shoot your subject.

Location scouting will come in handy if you have time so you can plan where to shoot from and when to shoot.

Give Importance to Composition:

As with all photography that you do, composition is key when taking travel photographs. Good composition can make a good photograph great. So, while placing elements, make sure you place them in such a way that they all relate to each other and speak the story that you want to tell.

Some of the compositional guidelines that you can incorporate into your travel photography are:

- the rule of thirds,
- negative space,
- the rule of odds,
- leading lines,
- s curve,
- patterns and textures,
- space for movement,
- contrast through colors,
- light and shadows,
- juxtaposition.

Look for the Light:

Light makes and breaks a photograph and this applies to anything that you will be shooting during your travels, be it a landscape, architecture or portraits.

The best time to shoot any of these is early in the mornings or late in the afternoons when the light will be soft, golden and will help accentuate textures and features of your subject. Early mornings also have an advantage where you will have the place to yourself away from the crowd and sunrise images are phenomenal!

So the best thing for you to do to get beautiful images is, to wake up early and stay out till late in the evening so you can document scenes right from the blue hour at dawn till the blue hour at dusk.

Maybe take a nap at noon to get yourself energized for the evening, night life, nightscape photography. It is also best to use apps like "The Photographer's Ephemeris" or "Photopills" to do location scouting and/or decide on the direction of light for a particular location and time.

Photograph People and their Culture

Most travel photographers stop with just photographing landscapes, famous landmarks and tourist locations of the destination, but forget the humans that make and bring life to the destinations that they travel to.

Photographing people and their culture can be very interesting, educational and can be a learning curve to venture into new areas of photography.

Walk around the areas, study and observe what the locals are doing and incorporate their lifestyles or daily activities to compose the image. Even better to learn a few basic words in the local language and use it to communicate with the locals to find out about their traditions, culture and daily activities.

Ask them to take their images if you are going for closeup posed images and these images can tell a great story about the life of the people in the area you are shooting. As much as possible, if there are other tourists, avoid them in the frame to get a truly authentic travel image.

Remember to:

- A. Always have the camera with you and always shoot raw.
- B. Backup images daily.
- C. Carry a good lightweight travel tripod if you need them for landscapes and long exposure photographs.
- D. Including humans in landscapes can tell a story and give a sense of the scale of the place.
- E. Stay safe and keep your gear discreet and carry them in bags with no flashy labels or expensive looks.
- F. Register and insure your photography gear



THE BEST TIME TO SHOOT ANY OF THESE IS EARLY IN THE MORNINGS OR LATE IN THE AFTERNOONS WHEN THE LIGHT WILL BE SOFT...



- G. Post process your travel images wisely to suit the vibe of the place you are photographing
- H. Use resources like 500px,

Instagram or Google images to research about places and look at the recent photos, so you get an idea of how you can photograph differently.

If you want yourself in the images, for example in a landscape, manually focus where you want to be and use a timer to take self-portraits.

Outdoor Photography

No matter if you're shooting landscapes or portraits, it seems that almost all outdoor photographs suffer from the same disease when they come out of the camera.

The most common issues you'll face almost every time you shoot something outdoors are overly bright skies, foregrounds that are too dark and a general lack of contrast and vibrancy.

While these things seem like serious issues, they can be fixed in Lightroom quite easily. It's actually surprising how much creative editing can be done in Lightroom without having to use Photoshop.

The following five tips can surely speed up and enhance your editing workflow when it comes to outdoors photography:

Check the highlights and shadows

Issues with highlights and shadows are among the most common ones in outdoors photography because we can't control the natural light.

Because of this, every photographer should develop the ability to quickly recognize overexposed and underexposed parts of the image and fix them.

An easy way to do this is to take a quick look at the histogram. For instance, if your histogram in the Develop module in Lightroom is smash-

ing up against the right wall, your highlights are overblown. On the other hand, if your histogram pushes to the far left, you probably need to bring up the shadows.

You should also know that decreasing the highlights can help you add more detail to the sky – this is quite important in landscapes!

Remove the Noise

If you happen to shoot models or landscapes in low light, chances are you'll have to deal with noise, especially if you're not using any additional lights.

Depending on your camera's ISO capabilities and the settings you used, there might be some noise in the image. The amount of noise you want to keep in your image is totally a personal preference, but it's something to consider when editing your portraits.

If you want to drop the noise, you just need to head to the detail tab in Lightroom and look for the luminance slider under the noise header. Preserving some noise in outdoors portraits can look appealing because some slight grain can give a certain vintage vibe.

Use White Balance, Color And Hue Properly

One question you should always ask yourself when shooting people or landscapes is 'what feeling do I want this

photo to convey?'

Despite the fact that you're shooting outdoors and using natural light, you can still alter the colors to depict exactly what you envisioned.

If you want to achieve a warm and cosy vibe, you should definitely stick to warmer color hues. In case you want something intense or gloomy, you might need to consider cooler colors. You can also create an interesting vintage vibe if you experiment with split toning options in Lightroom.

In case you like the original colors and you just want to enhance them a little bit, you can simply pull the vibrance slider to the right. This slider is designed to focus on colors that are less saturated and it lets you increase the overall saturation of your colors without overdoing any of them.

Increase The Contrast And Clarity

Lack of contrast and too much contrast are common issues in outdoor photography and they occur whenever lighting conditions are less than ideal.

If you want to increase the contrast in your photo, you should simply pull the contrast slider to the right a little bit. You shouldn't go too far, because it will



DECREASING THE HIGHLIGHTS CAN HELP YOU ADD MORE DETAIL TO THE SKY...



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Outdoor Photography (continued)



make your image look unnatural or you will lose a lot of detail.

Another thing you can do to make your image pop is to increase the clarity in Lightroom. You can pull the clarity slider to the right to add some edge contrast to your photo and make it appear less soft. A small to moderate increase in clarity usually makes the photo look sharper and clearer.

Decrease The Luminance Of The Blues

You have surely noticed that

many outdoors photos taken on a bright sunny day have overly bright skies. This issue usually ruins the entire photo, no matter how good it is in terms of composition.

There are two ways to deal with this – you can start using polarizing filters or you can learn some useful tricks in Lightroom. In the best case scenario, you can combine these two strategies for optimal results.

In order to fix bright skies in Lightroom, you should go to the blue slider (under the color header) and make

sure the luminance tab is selected just above the colors. When you decrease the luminance of the blues in your picture, this will make the color of your sky a deeper, richer blue. Simple as that!

You should see a vast improvement in your outdoors photos after applying these five simple tips.

YOU WILL NEED A LENS WHICH HAS A REALLY LARGE APERTURE. THIS IS THE 'F' NUMBER YOU CAN USUALLY FIND PRINTED SOMEWHERE ON THE LENS.

How to Photograph the Stars

Before we get started, it's essential to understand that astrophotography takes time and practice in order to achieve good results, so don't get frustrated if you don't nail it on the first go.

When it comes to photographing the night sky there isn't an exact setting which is going to achieve the same results across the board. This is due to the amount of atmospheric light which is available in your area. So in order to help get you started, I've decided to write a guide on "how to photograph the stars."

The aim is to shed some light on the type of equipment you will need and give you a general starting point for where your settings 'should' be so that you can head out into the night and have some fun with it.

Camera

You are going to need a DSLR camera or a camera which allows you to manually control the shutter speed, the aperture, and the ISO. An automatic camera just isn't going to get you the results you're after.

Lens

You will need a lens which has a really large aperture. This is the 'f' number you can usually find printed somewhere on the lens. Another way to tell how wide the aperture of your lens is, is by adjusting the aperture setting on the camera (how low will the number go?). This is going to control the amount of light which comes in through your lens. Because you are going to be shooting at night a lens which has a greater opening (smaller 'f' number) is better.

Tripod

You are going to need some form of a tripod, the sturdier the better. This is because you're going to be shooting long exposures and this means your camera is going to need to stay incredibly still for a given period of time. Any camera shake will result in blurry photos and we don't want that.

Remote Trigger

This isn't essential but it's always a handy tool to have in the camera bag. It will help you avoid camera shake when you push the shutter release button down. A handy workaround to this, if you don't have one, is simply using the timer function on your camera to delay taking the photo by 2 seconds, that way you will be nowhere near the camera when the photo is taken. You can also use the remote trigger to engage the



bulb setting on your camera which will allow you to shoot exposures longer than 30 seconds.

Flashlight

This is a great item to have in your kit. You can use a flashlight during long exposures to help paint in the subjects in the foreground of your image. For example, this could be used to paint in a tree or some rocks etc. You can even use a flashlight creatively if you want to jump in the shot. I'm sure you have all seen the images which float around the internet of people pointing the flashlight up to the stars in their photos?

Night Sky

The location is very important when it comes to astrophotography. You want to find the darkest place possible, which means you want to avoid being anywhere near big cities or small towns. When it comes to star photography, we like to refer to the light emitted from cities and towns as light pollution due to the fact that it makes seeing the stars harder. The most ideal places to photograph the night sky are international dark sky reserves. This is where you will find the stars to be at their brightest because there will be little to no light pollution. Have a search on Google to see if there is an international dark sky reserve near you.

When I am looking for a location to photograph the night sky, I usually tend to visit the area during the day prior to heading out at night. The reason I do this is because I like to look for a subject or a point of interest that I can include in my photos. This way, not only will you have

the bright stars in the background of your shot but you will also have a subject in the foreground.

Camera Settings, Shutter Speed

You want to use a long exposure time (slow shutter speed) when doing astrophotography, this will give your camera's sensor enough time to record those little dots of flickering light. Usually, a good place to start is somewhere in between 20 seconds and 30 seconds. If you want to avoid any form of star trails, then use the rule of 600. Because we are stationary in our position on earth, as the earth spins the stars will very slowly move across the sky in front of our camera, which will cause the stars to create a trail of light. These photos can be incredibly unique in their own right but if you want to avoid that, divide 600 by the focal length you are shooting at. In my case its almost always 16mm because I want to fit as many stars in my shot as possible. $600/16 = 37.5$ which means that I can use a shutter speed of 37 seconds before the stars begin to create trails in my photo.

But on the other, hand if your aim is to capture star trails then my advice would be to take a series of photos, one immediately after the other. In most cases, I would take a series of 100 photos and create the star trail in post-processing. Read on for how to achieve this in post-processing.

Aperture

Usually when it comes to setting your aperture, its

best to shoot as wide as your lens allows (smallest 'f' number). This will let the largest amount of light into your camera. This means that you can shoot with a lower ISO which is almost always desirable or a slower shutter speed if desired. The lowest my lenses allow me to go is f2.8, so that's what I always shoot with when photographing the stars.

ISO

Your ISO will usually range anywhere from 800 – 2000. I personally try to use a slower shutter speed (longer exposure time) and keep my ISO towards the lower end of that scale. Doing it this way creates less noise in my images.

Focusing

When it comes to focusing you want to set your lens to manual focus and adjust it to infinity, this is the safest bet when shooting distant objects. Most lenses do have a mark which tells you what infinity is. This is a little 'L' or 'I' on the focusing ring of your lens. Once set, take a photo and then zoom in on the stars using the LCD panel and magnifying glass button on the back of the camera. If it's not 100% sharp, try adjusting the focus ever so slightly and taking another shot. Repeat until the stars are in focus. If you want to focus on a tree or subject in the foreground then I usually set the camera to autofocus, point the flashlight at the subject to light it and focus until your camera tells you that focus has been achieved. I then switch back to manual focus without bumping the focusing ring, this means all your images will be in focus and sharp.



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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.

How to Photograph the Stars (continued)

Lens Stabilization

Some lenses have this option and some don't. If your lens has a stabilization control, then you want to switch it off when shooting long exposures with a tripod. Doing this prevents the camera/lens from continually trying to auto-stabilize any shake. We do this because the tripod is already stabilizing the camera for us and this will lead to sharper photos.



Post Processing, Lightroom

Don't be disappointed if the images on the back of the camera don't look exactly like the images you have seen on the internet or in magazines. When it comes to astrophotography a lot of the magic will happen in post-

processing. This is where you can adjust some important settings like the highlights, the whites, the exposure, and even some clarity in order to really help those stars' pop.

Photoshop

If you took a series of star photos because your aim is to create star trails then import all the photos into Lightroom and apply your desired adjustments to a single image. Now sync the adjustments applied to the single image across every other image in the series and import them into photoshop as layers. Once they are all imported, highlight all the images. Then in the layer's tab adjust the setting from normal to lighten and boom! There are your light trails.

Why You Must Become Your Own Photographer

First of all, you must be an independent photographer. Don't be tied down with a collective, don't be a slave to Instagram, and don't care whether others like your photos. Don't seek to make photos that will impress others. Seek to make photos that you love; photos which others actually might disdain!

When lots of people say they like your photos, don't get blinded. Still strive to be objective and cold with your photos.

If someone calls you "selfish", what they mean to say is that you're "evil".

This is a silly notion. The best thing is to be selfish; to be self-centered, and self focused. Why? Because it means you will be authentic, independent, and not strive to curry the fa-

vor from others. This means you will be able to seek joy and happiness within yourself, by yourself, without needing to impress others.

Judge your own photos

This is the problem I had with my photography in the past: I only thought the photo was good if others thought it was good. But why do you value the opinions of others over your own opinion?

To me, photography is fun, and like playing! Photos only have merit when they're created in a spirit of play.

