

# THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



## The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

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April 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 April 1, 2019, Mississippi Community Room 106, Sunrise or Sunset:** Sunrise in our area at this time is about 6:30am and Sunset is about 8:00pm. An hour before or after these times are great times to shoot.

**Monday May 6, 2019,** This meeting was to have been an outing at Quarry Park but it has been cancelled due to conflicts. The library is fully scheduled also. Looks like no meeting this month.

**Monday, June 3, 2019, Bremer Community Room 104, Churches:** Photograph both the inside and outside. Shoot a landscape that includes the building.



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### Taking Pictures With an iPhone

Here are a few tips and tricks to take the best outdoor shots with your iPhone. When adventuring outdoors the iPhone is the perfect camera to keep close by. Many modern day backpacks now offer secure and big front pockets at the shoulder or hip straps to store your phone for easy access so you never miss capturing that awesome moment on your weekend adventure trip.

#### First and Foremost

Always treat nature with the utmost care and respect. Stay on the marked trails. Never trample over wildflowers to capture that perfect shot. Stay at least 100 yards from bears or wolves and at least 25 yards from all other wildlife. And don't get yourself into a situation where looking through the lens of your camera distracts you from potential danger. Serious folks, Instagram fame is not worth putting yourself into harm's way.

#### People or not.

If you take pictures mainly for personal use and posting to social media, including peo-

ple in the shots, not just lets you remember the good times with friends and family but also helps give a sense of scale to the photo. A person next to a tree or a giant sunflower makes the tree look so much grander. If you're taking outdoor photos for professional use leave the out people This keeps the focus on the scenery and mood. And it that gives you the most flexibility of what to do with them afterward.

#### Pano Mode, but not always all the way.

When you find yourself in a vantage point where you do want a bit more width than your regular horizontal view offers use 'pano' to get that extra edge without going all the way. Especially when capturing mountain ranges in the distance and other impressive features on the horizon, pano lends itself perfectly for this. The panorama feature now is almost 360 degrees. That often takes too wide a photo that you can hardly use for anything but a giant panorama photo. You



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## Taking Pictures With an iPhone (continued)



TAKE SOME TIME TO LOOK AT YOUR PICS ON THE BIGGEST POSSIBLE SCREEN.



can also use the pano feature upside down, which is great for waterfalls, giant trees, and other tall things. Reverse the direction by clicking on the arrow on the center of the screen, this can come in handy when sunlight shines brightly on one side of the horizon washing out the entire image.

### Capture the Trail.

If you want to remember your outdoor adventures there is often no better way than to capture the places you've been. Framing a trail or a bridge you crossed in the center of your image will place you in the outdoors without you being in the photo.

### Against the sun

Those shots can feel washed out, but sometimes perfectly capture the mood. When taking those shots, be sure to lock the focus by tapping on your screen and selecting the subject you're photographing then adjusting using the slider as needed.

### Work with the sun:

When taking portrait shots make sure the subjects aren't squinting into the sun. Also avoid mid-day sun, if you can. The harsh sunlight can throw unwanted shadows on people's faces. Portrait mode can create

some stunning contrast you can adjust if you're not happy with the capture using edit mode. Shooting at dusk and dawn often creates some of the most stunning sceneries. Let the sun illuminate what you're capturing and play with exposure to capture the right feeling.

### Off-center Shooting

Use the 'Rule of Thirds' to frame your subject not directly in the center but off to the side, letting two-thirds of picture breathe. This creates tension in the final photo which can create stunning results. Panorama mode works well too when trying to create this off-center tension.

### Find a unique angle:

Sometimes the best photos are the ones that aren't from eye level. Getting low onto the ground can create a dramatic effect, or waiting behind as your hiking party marches on to capture them in the larger panorama. Putting the camera right on a handrail of a bridge creates a stunning angle.

### Action Shot

Use burst mode to make

sure you capture the action and select your favorite via the edit feature.

### Third Party Apps

There are ton of third-party apps on the market both free and paid apps that offer more than just gimmicks. ISO & shutter speed adjustment, various file formats other pro options that give you the desired look and feel for a specific shoot.

### Post-production

Take some time to look at your pics on the biggest possible screen. On your Mac, you can easily edit out the duds. And post produce the good ones with the built in tools in Photos. Just making minor adjustment can result in your photos looking more polished.

### Final Word

Not every moment needs to be captured with your camera and experienced through your viewfinder. Sometimes it's best to sit back and enjoy the moment. Be with the people around you. Sit still and breathe, open your heart, and let your mind go. Yes, even if it didn't make it to Instagram, it still happened, and you were there to experience it.

## Composition and Technique

People pictures fall into two categories: portraits and candid. Either can be made with or without your subject's awareness and cooperation.

However near or far your subject, however intimate or distant the gaze your camera casts, you

always need to keep in mind the elements of composition and the technique that will best help you communicate what you are trying to say.

### Get Closer

The most common mistake made by photographers is that they are not physically close enough to their subjects. In some cases this means that the center of interest—the subject—is just

a speck, too small to have any impact. Even when it is big enough to be decipherable, it usually carries little meaning. Viewers can sense when a subject is small because it was supposed to be and when it's small because the photographer was too shy to get close.

Don't be shy. If you approach people in the right way, they'll usually be happy to have their picture made. It's up to you to break the ice and get them to cooperate. Joke around with them. Tell them why you want to make the picture. Practice with people you know so that you are comfortable; people can sense when you aren't.

## Get more of the inspiring photos

The settings in which you make pictures of people are important because they add to the viewer's understanding of your subject. The room in which a person lives or works, their house, the city street they walk, the place in which they seek relaxation—whatever it is, the setting provides information about people and tells us something about their lives. Seek balance between subject and environment. Include enough of the setting to aid your image, but not so much that the subject is lost in it.

## Candids: Being Unobtrusive

You may want to make photographs of people going about their business—vendors in a market, a crowd at a sports event, the line at a theater. You don't want them to appear aware of the camera. Many times people will see you, then ignore you because they have to concentrate on

what they are doing. You want the viewers of the image to feel that they are getting an unguarded, fly-on-the-wall glimpse into the scene.

There are several ways to be unobtrusive. The first thing, of course, is to determine what you want to photograph. Perhaps you see a stall in a market that is particularly colorful, a park bench in a beautiful setting—whatever has attracted you. Find a place to sit or stand that gives you a good view of the scene, take up residence there, and wait for the elements to come together in a way that will make your image.

If you're using a long lens and are some distance from your subject, it will probably be a while before the people in the scene notice you. You should be able to compose your image and get your shot before this happens. When they do notice you, smile and wave. There's a difference between being unobtrusive and unfriendly. Another way to be unobtrusive is to be there long enough so that people stop paying attention to you. If you are sitting at a café order some coffee and wait. As other patrons become engrossed in conversations or the paper, calmly lift the camera to your eye and make your exposure. In most cases, people either won't notice or won't mind. But be judicious. Don't keep firing away and become a nuisance. They will mind. You can also set the camera on the table with a wide-angle lens pointed at your subject and simply press the remote release when the time is right. Modern auto focus and auto exposure cameras make this easy to do as well.

## Anticipating Behavior

An important element in people photography is knowing your subjects well enough to be able to anticipate what they are going to do. It's the only way you are going to be able to get pictures of it. If you wait until you see it, it's too late. The key is to watch people carefully. Always have your camera ready. If you're going to be shooting in one situation, set the aperture and shutter speed in advance so you don't have to fiddle with them while you're shooting. Watch people through the viewfinder. If you're paying attention, you'll sense what's about to happen.

## Predicting Relationships Within the Frame

A great deal of people photography is understanding human nature and being aware of how people usually react in given situations. If someone is sitting in a café he will usually look up when the waiter approaches. People will generally smile when they see a baby or open a present. Crowds rise when a batter smashes a ball that looks like it's headed for the seats. Think about the situation you are photographing and how people are likely to act in it. Then prepare yourself for the moment.

## Candids With Consent

Unobtrusive candids seek to be fly-on-the-wall images that catch people going about their business seemingly unaware of the camera and the photographer. This yields images that are more toward the objective end of the objective/



THERE'S A  
DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN BEING  
UNOBSTRUCTIVE  
AND UNFRIENDLY.



# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Composition and Technique (continued)



**SOME PEOPLE HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH PHOTOGRAPHY, AND YOU SHOULD TREAT THEM IN THE SAME COURTEOUS AND RESPECTFUL WAY YOU WOULD TREAT PEOPLE AT HOME**

subjective continuum, though there is not, of course, any photograph made by a human that is completely objective. Candid with consent, made when the photographer is actively engaged with the subject and the subject is conscious of this involvement, are very different. Photographs are records of the photographer's relationship with his or her subject. In consensual candid, the relationship can be either obvious (the subject looks directly into the camera) or subtle—the relationship is implied because the image feels more intimate. We sense that the photographer was physically close to the subject and that the person was aware of being photographed.

### Engaging Your Subject

The first order of business is to engage your subject. This is where we all have to learn to overcome our shyness and approach people in an open and friendly manner. Be up front about who you are and what you're doing. Don't just barge into a scene with your cameras blazing. In fact, it is usually best to leave your camera in its bag when you first approach people, so as not to frighten them. Take time to engage the person in conversation, just as you would if you didn't have a camera. Remember the Golden Rule. Think about how you'd feel if someone approached you and wanted to make a photograph. How they did it would determine how you would respond.

### Approaching Unfamiliar Cultures

One of the keys to success in photographing cultures different from your own is doing as much research as you can before you go. Talk to people who have been there and get their recommendations. Find out if there are any taboos about photography, and if so, what they are. Another key to success is to be sensitive to local customs and the different reactions people may have to you and your camera. Learn a few simple phrases in the local language so you can at least say hello to people and ask if you can make photographs of them.

Some people have no problems with photography, and you should treat them in the same courteous and respectful way you would treat people at home, by engaging them and seeking their permission. Others have objections to photographs being made of certain individuals or groups. Some people object on religious grounds. Some feel that you want to make fun of them, to show their poverty or some other aspect of their lives to the world. Other people believe that when you make an image of them you are stealing their soul or in some other way taking something away from them.

They are right, of course. Photographers talk about capturing the essence or spirit of a person or place. We do take something, and we profit by the taking. You

should always respect people's feelings and beliefs. There are selfish reasons for this—you don't want to be beaten up or thrown in jail. But the main point is that people are always more important than photographs. You don't want to abuse people, and doing something against a strongly held belief is abuse. And the photographs would probably not be very good anyway.

You may be asked to pay for photographing certain people. My advice is to comply with such requests. You pay for a postcard when you travel, why not for an image you make? It is usually not much money to you, but may be quite a lot to the people you want to photograph. If you do not want to pay, you can always move on.

### The Casual Portrait

Wherever you are with your camera, always be on the lookout for those moments when a person's character shines through. If you have a formal portrait session with someone, make some frames of him while he straightens his tie or while she brushes her hair before the formal sitting. Walk back to the car with her and shoot her on the street. If you are on a spring picnic with the family, look for that moment of bliss when your wife leans back, sated, to enjoy the caress of the warm sun. If you're on the street, look for the impatient expression on a pedestrian's face as he waits for the light to change. Always be on the lookout for the telling moment. Every person has a story, and every picture should



tell part of that story.

## Environmental Portraits

Portraits are about people. Environmental portraits are about people and what they do with their lives. They are about the kind of house a person lives in and how they decorate it; about what kind of work they do and where they do it; about the surroundings they choose and the things they surround themselves with. Environmental portraits seek to convey an idea about a person by combining portraiture with a sense of place.

## Group Portraits

Group portraits are hard to do well, and the larger the group, the harder they are. It's not easy to get a good, telling photograph of one person, and the problems are compounded exponentially with groups. We have all had the experience of trying to get the family or the ball team to pose for a picture. Just getting all of them arranged so you can see their faces is hard enough. Then, of course, you want an image where everyone looks good—no one's eyes closed, no grimacing. Making group portraits takes imagination, patience, and diplomacy. Use your imagination. Find a way to relate the group to an environment that expresses something about what kind of

group they are. Do it literally, humorously, dramatically, or by complete contrast. Get ideas from them.

## Familiar Subjects

Our family members are the people we photograph most frequently. We record the momentous occasions and the occasional moments. Albums full of baby pictures, first steps, Little League games, Halloweens, Thanksgivings, and weddings mark our passage through time. These photographs are our memories made real and are probably the most important pictures we will ever make or have. You should apply thought and technique just as rigorously, if not more so, to photographing your family as you do to any photo assignment. There is no better group on which to practice photography. No others will be so trusting or willing to indulge your ever present camera, your fumbling around with lights, and your mistakes. When you are photographing strangers, you either get the picture or you don't. There is no going back to a fleeting moment. With your family, you can work on getting a similar moment again, and again, and again.

## Hands and Other Details

The hands of a farmer, a pianist, a baker. The feet of a ballet dancer, a long distance runner, a place kicker. The belly of a pregnant woman, the bicep of a weight lifter. Hair caressing a pillow, fingers clutched in prayer, a peering eye. The details of the human body make great photographic subjects, either as expressions of ideas or emotions, as graphic shots, or as a way to say something about an individual. Whenever you are photographing someone, try to think of details of their body or dress that would get your message across in an indirect way.

Are there particular parts of their body or items of what they wear that are important to what they do for a living or a hobby? Does some part of them really stand out? Can you find a way to abstract what you want to say about the person by using one of these elements?

The point is to use your eyes and your imagination, whether you want to use detail and abstraction to say something about an individual or about the beauty of the human body. If you are making photographs of details of the human body, you will be working intimately with people and will have to direct them, tell them where to pose, and how.



YOU SHOULD APPLY THOUGHT AND TECHNIQUE JUST AS RIGOROUSLY, IF NOT MORE SO, TO PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR FAMILY AS YOU DO TO ANY PHOTO ASSIGNMENT.



## Histogram: A Most Reliable Tool

The histogram is one of the most reliable tools in photography because it allows photographers to understand exposure and get it right every time. Histograms are extremely important because the cam-

era's LCD screen doesn't always accurately represent the image; however, the histogram can't be wrong. It can be quite useful to frequently look at the LCD af-

ter taking a shot and adjust your settings according to the histogram rather than according to the image preview.

This is especially true in 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](mailto:rheath@tds.net).

case of landscape photography, because it can be really hard to rely on your image preview when you shoot outdoors and lighting conditions are changing all the time. Because of this, the histogram should be the best friend of every serious landscape photographer.

**What Is A Histogram?**

If you still don't know much about histograms, don't worry – we'll make sure to explain them in a simple way.

Histograms are simple graphs that display where all of the brightness levels contained in the scene are found, from the darkest to the brightest ones. You will notice that these values are spread across the bottom of the graph from left (darkest) to right (brightest).

You should also pay attention to the vertical axis of histograms – it is the height of points on the graph. The vertical axis shows how much of the image is found at any particular brightness level.

If you're wondering how your camera creates histograms, here's the easiest explanation – the camera converts the image to grey-scale and divides it into 256 levels of brightness, starting at 0 (pure black) and going up to 256 (pure white). Then camera analyzes each pixel of the image and displays this information in the histogram chart.

**Good And Bad Histograms**

You have probably heard about the term "perfect histogram". It looks like a bell-shaped curve, all its tones fall within the edges (there is no underexposure and burnt-out highlights) and it displays a fairly even distribution of tones.

However, it's often impossible to achieve this kind of histogram and you should also remember that the best shape of the histogram

depends on the content of the individual image. Some photos will look better if you aim at an evenly distributed curve, while others are perfectly fine even though their histogram doesn't stick to the basic rules.

However, there are certain situation you should avoid, no matter the content of your image. Bear in mind that histograms that are very heavily bunched up to the right (overexposed) or to the left (underexposed) mean that the image is poorly exposed. While portraiture (mostly studio sessions) can be highly futuristic and avant-garde in terms of exposure, this is usually not the case with landscape photography.

**Why Understanding Histograms Matters**

If you're still not convinced about the importance of histograms, you should consider the following facts:

The histogram is always an accurate representation of your image's brightness levels.

Using the histogram is the only foolproof way of analyzing if an image is too dark or too bright

Ultimately, understanding the histogram will help you improve your photos and make them more balanced.

You can analyze the histogram directly on your camera's LCD screen or do it later while post-processing. Both Photoshop and Lightroom will allow you to read histograms. You can also choose how you want to preview your histogram by switching among the following channels – RGB, Red, Green, Blue, Luminosity, and Colors.

