

# THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



## The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 11, Issue 10

October 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.

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

**Thursday, October 10, 2019**, Bremer Community Room 106: **Night**, any time after 8:00pm should work. Take street scenes, activities, sports, and lighted buildings are examples.

**Monday, November 4, 2019**, Mississippi Community Room 104. **Fall Colors**, Go to some of your favorite places — parks, street scenes, farms, and countryside venues.

**Monday, December 2, 2019**, Bremer Room 104. Send your “**5 Best**” of the year to [jbregan063@gmail.com](mailto:jbregan063@gmail.com) so that we can project them while we enjoy holiday treats.



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### Do You Need A Dedicated Camera?

Those amazing Instagram photos? They were probably taken with a dedicated camera. As smartphone cameras get more capable, sales of dedicated cameras like DSLRs and mirrorless cameras are plummeting. For most people it just doesn't make sense to own one, but for starting photo enthusiasts, it still might.

If you were planning on becoming a photographer, the decision would be easy. However, when it comes to investing your hard earned money in a hobby you're only starting out with, you'll probably spend a lot of time asking yourself if it's a good idea to get a dedicated camera. And if you finally decide to go for it then there's the whole with-one-to-buy conundrum—and things get even more complicated.

#### How to know if you need a dedicated camera

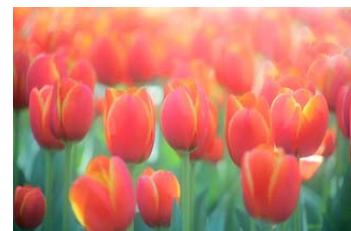
Dedicated cameras aren't cheap. Even an entry-level point-and-shoot will set you back \$150. The top-end mirrorless and DSLR cam-

eras cost thousands of dollars, and that's before you even get a lens, which can go for anywhere between \$120 for a very simple 50mm prime, to \$20,000 for the kind of kit you see sports photographers use at NFL games.

If you're thinking about buying a camera, you need to make sure you need it and will actually use it before forking over the cash. Otherwise, you'll just be buying an expensive drawer ornament.

#### Your smart phone just won't cut it anymore.

Taking pictures with your smartphone in low light situations such as a concert, can be a real challenge. The lens aperture on your phone fixed, so even though you can play with manual controls such as ISO and shutter speed, you will only benefit from a dedicated camera if you've already hit the limits of these settings. You also have to know what those terms mean and how they affect your photos.



# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Do You Need A Dedicated Camera (continued)



SOMETIMES IF AN IMAGE HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM EYE LEVEL I THINK IT WOULD BE WEAKER.



If you don't know what I'm talking about, maybe you're not at that stage and a camera will only end up being an awkward, bulky thing to carry around. On the other hand, if you've already dug into the little control you have over exposure on your smartphone, then a dedicated camera might be just what you need.

### You need more zoom

One area where smartphones just can't compete with dedicated cameras is zoom. This is because your smartphone camera is not actually doing any zooming, but only cropping your photo so it looks like you've zoomed in. The physics of optics is simple: Generally speaking, to get more zoom, the longer focal length lenses have to be longer. A 200mm telephoto lens with around 4x zoom isn't exactly 20cm (about 8") long, but it's in the ballpark. As you might imagine, it's impossible to cram that sort of thing into smartphones, which actually aim for the exact opposite—to become thinner and lighter.

If you like to shoot photos of your kids playing field sports or the wild birds in your backyard, then you've almost certainly discovered that the digital zoom on your smartphone gets murky and blurry. A dedicated camera will definitely help you get those shots.

### You want to put the effort into taking better pictures

Unless I dig deep into an image I see online, I normally can't tell whether it was shot with a phone or a professional DSLR. Smartphones are almost as good as dedicated cameras in most situations, but those "most"s and "normally"s still

matter.

Smartphone cameras perform really well in broad daylight or when there's loads of natural light streaming in through a window, when nothing is moving too quickly, and you're not going for a particular look or effect. Take family photos on vacation and your smartphone will do a perfect job. Try to take photos of the stars at night, or just low-light shots in the woods at sunset, and dedicated cameras come into their own.

However, cameras only work in those situations if you are prepared to put the effort into setting them up correctly. If you leave it in automatic mode, the photos will be only slightly better than your smartphone's, hence, pretty useless.

If you really want to take great photos at family events, parties, and anything else, whatever the lighting situation, then it's a safer bet to ditch your smartphone and opt for a dedicated camera instead—as long as you're prepared to learn how to use it.

### How to buy a dedicated camera

Cameras are not cheap. Neither are lenses. But if you learn how to use one, the investment will be totally worth it.

If you made it this far it means I haven't warned you off and you're now convinced you need or want a dedicated camera.

Now, comes the tricky part: You have to choose one. Yes, that does sound a bit scary, but we're here to help and tell you about some of the big things you need to consider.

### Choose a platform

There are three main kinds of dedicated cameras: DSLRs, mirrorless cameras, and point-and-shoots. DSLRs and mirrorless cameras are both interchangeable lens cameras, which means you can buy different lenses for different purposes and swap between them. Point-and-shoot cameras have a single lens built into their body.

At an entry-level, DSLRs and mirrorless cameras are pretty similar, though there are some characteristics that set them apart—DSLRs have an optical viewfinder, and mirrorless cameras are slightly smaller and lighter.

Since DSLRs and mirrorless cameras will require you to invest in lenses (again, not cheap) consider what you already have access to to decide on a brand. If you happen to know someone who has a decent collection of Canon or Nikon DSLR lenses you can borrow, or if you got a tip on where to go for good second-hand lenses from a certain brand, go with a DSLR from the same manufacturer. If you want a more modern design, go with a mirrorless camera from Sony, Olympus, or Fujifilm. Whichever platform and brand you commit to, know these two factors will be crucial in any future camera choices. I started shooting with a Nikon DSLR and have

been doing so for almost a decade now. Changing systems is just too costly for, at best, minor benefits.

Point-and-shoots, with their single built-in lens, are simpler than DSLRs and mirrorless cameras. They have two big advantages: they tend to be small and easy to pocket, and you get a lot more zoom for a lot less money. You need to spend thousands of dollars to get the lens required to have 10x zoom with a DSLR, while you can get the same feature built into a \$200 point-and-shoot. In terms of image quality, an entry-level point-and-shoot sits pretty much in the middle of smartphones and interchangeable lens cameras. Definitely better than your phone, but not quite as good as a DSLR.

If you want to go deep down the photography rabbit hole, go with either a DSLR or a mirrorless camera. On the other hand, if you just want something that will take better pictures or has lots of zoom, go with a point-and-shoot.

## Set a budget

Oh no, your budget should not only consider the camera, but also lenses. And a bag. And, if landscapes are your thing, also a tripod.

In case I haven't stressed this enough, I'll say it again—cameras aren't cheap. So, before you think of heading down to your favorite photo retailer (which is what I'd generally recommend over buying cameras and accessories online), you should set a budget. It's very easy to up-sell yourself into thinking you need to spend more money on a camera after reading a few reviews online, and the total price you'll pay for the

camera, lenses, and probably a bag to carry them around or store them, can get out of hand pretty easily.

For a point-and-shoot camera, the budget just has to cover the cost of the camera—around \$200 for a good entry level model, and about \$600 if you want something great.

For DSLRs and mirrorless cameras, however, there are a few extras you need to factor in. The kit lens that will come with your camera is a great starter lens, but most likely won't have much zoom or a very wide aperture. It's handy for family photos, travel snaps, landscapes, and general day-to-day stuff, but if you want to shoot sports and wildlife, or portraits and low-light images, you need to think about buying another lens that will give you better results.

Similarly, a tripod is really handy for landscapes—but a decent one will set you back another \$100. If you have \$600 budget, instead of spending it all on a camera, you're almost certainly better buying a slightly less fancy \$450 camera, and use the rest to buy gear you'll need to get the photos you want to take, like a tripod or portrait lens.

## Research your options and buy your camera

The most important step is to go out and take photos. Try different settings, different subjects and light situations.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret that'll make your decision easier: nowadays every camera from a major manufacturer is pretty great. The specs are largely market-

ing material and unless you really know what you're doing, the small differences between Canon and Nikon's entry-level DSLRs (or Sony and Olympus's mirrorless models) aren't going to have any real world impact on the quality of your images. Every camera has more than enough megapixels, a big-enough ISO range, and a suitably wide dynamic range to get you started.

The best thing to do is find the cameras from reputable manufacturers (Canon, Nikon, Sony, Olympus, Fujifilm, and Panasonic) that fit your budget, read a few reviews, and compare between them to find the one that best suits your needs. It is highly unlikely you'll end up accidentally buying a dud.

Also, if you want to make your budget stretch a little further, there's a lot to be said for buying a second hand model from either your local camera store or good online shop like B&H. A lot of the "improvements" over the last few years have been things like touchscreens and Wi-Fi, rather than pure image quality. A higher-end camera from three years ago will take photos that are just as good, if not better, than a just released entry-level model.

## Learn to (really) use it

Whatever camera you use, it's only as good as you—DSLRs don't magically take great pictures. To get the most from your new camera, you need to learn how to use it. If you're lucky, the shop might offer a short



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## Do You Need A Dedicated Camera (continued)



introductory class with your purchase, but otherwise you're on your own.

If you don't already know the basics of photography, start by reading a beginners book or guide. I love Understanding Exposure by Bryan Peter-

son. After that, read through your camera's manual to find out how all the different modes and controls work. You want to be able to change the different settings as if it were a second nature to you.

And finally, the most important step of all: get your new camera, go out and take some photos.

## Cheap Lense

Cheap lenses offer an excellent way for photographers to build up a collection, but in the long run, you'll pay for them in more ways than one.

At the beginning of your photographic journey, it's easy to drop a few hundred bucks on a cheap lens that you're sure will lead you to greatness. Continue to do this, and you will amass a collection of cheap lenses that you believe are doing an excellent job for you. Mark these words, though, as there will come a time when you progress in your abilities, and you will start to see the shortcomings of your cheap lenses. You'll also realize just how much money you now have tied up in lenses that just don't cut it. 7Artisans announced new 35mm f1.4 lens which sounds excellent, but this makes us wonder whether cheaper lenses always cost you more in the long run.

An article on Sony Alpha Rumors shed some light on a new 7Artisans 35mm f1.4 lens for Sony's E Mount cameras. 7Artisans are known for making reasonably well-built lenses that offer great image quality. The kicker is the price you can get them for: they are very affordable. I will say

there is nothing inherently wrong with buying cheap lenses like this one. I have purchased many, just as I'm sure that you have, but I have always been left wanting more after a short time.

What makes the NEW Brother INKvestment TANK the most VALUE-PACKED INKvestment TANK model?

The MFC-J805DW all-in-one printer comes with up to 1-year of ink in-box, productivity features plus Brother reliability for under \$160!

You absolutely can create great images with cheap lenses if you know what you're doing. Many photographers have made excellent images with lenses like the 7Artisans 50mm f1.1, pictured above. You'll go out, you'll shoot, and you will be floored by what these lenses can produce. As stated above, as you progress, you will start to wonder what more expensive lenses could do.

Yes, it's the photographer that makes the image and not the camera or the lens. We know this, but higher quality gear will help you

produce higher quality work; that's just a fact. Spend a little more and you can get sharper images, and you'll find that vignetting, distortion, and chromatic aberrations are all controlled better too. Higher-tiered lenses are often weather-sealed and offer autofocus capabilities, while lenses such as the new 7Artisans 35mm f1.4 are manual focus affairs.

By all means, purchase lenses like those offered by 7Artisans: there is nothing really wrong with them. But don't put all of your eggs in the cheap lens basket. Cheap lenses are great for those who are starting out, but do yourself a favor and save for better glass down the line. If you really want to start producing work that can make you money, you're much better off investing in higher priced lenses.

If all of your lenses are on the cheaper side of things, that's okay, but it's a guarantee that eventually you will sell them off to go on to bigger and better things. During the process, you'll lose hundreds of dollars because cheap lenses do not retain their value like lenses from Sigma, Tamron, Canon, Ni-

**TO STANDOUT,  
MAKE YOUR  
PHOTOS SUPER  
PERSONAL, AND  
DON'T CENSOR  
YOURSELF.**





kon, Sony, and Fujifilm do. So, earlier than later, do yourself a favor and invest in higher

quality glass rather than filling your camera bag with cheap lenses. You will

save yourself a ton of money in the long run.

## Artificial Intelligence Photo Editor

Get this \$35 AI Photo Editor for Free and Stop Wasting Time on Manual Processing

We live such hectic lives that there's hardly ever any time to stop and appreciate the beauty around us (let alone take a picture of it). Even if you do manage to carve out a little photography time, even the simplest editing offers new challenges to overcome. All the tools, masks, layers, filters — not everyone has time for that.

### AI to the Rescue

Are you short on time, or even (gasp) don't like photo editing? AI and machine learning can help. By working with top photographers and looking at millions of before and after images, Photolemur can solve over a dozen photo issues automatically.

Skylum knows that a lot of photographers aren't sure how to work AI into their workflow (and might even be a little afraid of the impending "robot invasion"). That's why they are offering a free, fully-licensed copy absolutely of Photolemur. No strings attached, yours to keep, but the offer is time-limited. Click the link to get Photolemur.

### Real Corrections that you Control

Skylum Software has found the perfect balance between AI and humanity. Their photo editing tools remove the boring parts of photo editing, but still offer intuitive, uncluttered controls to refine the look. You

won't believe how refreshing it is to finally find the tool that allows you to bring out the best in your photo in just a click or two.

### Here are the key features of Photolemur:

#### Perfect exposure

Get the ideal exposure under any light, every pixel is optimized for great tone, detail, and color.

#### Automatic skin and face enhancement

Within seconds, the skin in a photo gets smoother, teeth whiter and imperfections disappear.

#### Smart eyes

To create an expressive portrait, Photolemur can slightly enlarge the eyes and enhance their sharpness.

#### Adding style to photos

Do you sometimes feel like your images need a new creative look? Photolemur solves this problem with its styles that instantly transform the mood of your photo.

—\*—

Photolemur is your chance to experience this firsthand. You can fix color, tone, skin, skies, and more without tedious, boring work. Photolemur makes the art of editing photos accessible to nearly everyone. Now, you don't need to have advanced skills or

knowledge to adjust your images to make them more eye-pleasing. Simply to drag and drop a picture (or launch a Photoshop or Lightroom plugin) and let the amazing Photolemur take care of the complex photo editing in no time.

### Who is Skylum Software?

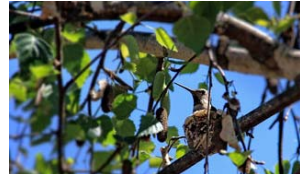
Skylum Software is an innovative company that has been creating cutting-edge photo editing solutions for over a decade. They hope you find AI tools useful and check out their award-winning Luminar and Aurora HDR tools. They want to make photographers' lives more relaxed with the help of Artificial Intelligence.

Simply put, they think once you try Photolemur you'll love it. And if you do, that you'll check out their new Luminar 4 plugin and application. Regardless, Photolemur is 100% free. The app and plugin will completely change your workflow for the better.



BY DEFAULT ADOBE PHOTOGRAPHY PLAN SUBSCRIBERS GET 100GB OF CLOUD STORAGE TO USE WITH THE CLOUD-BASED LIGHTROOM CC APP.





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](mailto:rheath@tds.net).

## The iPhone 11



Apple underwhelmed even tempered expectations with the iPhone 11 – is it really still relevant by 2019 standards?

Once upon a time, 'new iPhone day' used to raise the bar. Every year the bar went up, the phones got better and public went wilder. Over the last few years, though, Apple seems to have actively lowered the bar – which is epitomized by the lukewarm launch of the iPhone 11.

Stripped of all context, the three new iPhones are perfectly capable smartphones. However, outside the Apple bubble and compared to what the other major manufacturers are doing, there's no getting around the fact that they are completely average.

The addition of a third camera to the iPhone 11 isn't so much a step in the right direction as a deliberate half-step. Apple knows full well that its competitors produce products with four cameras or more, products with time-of-flight sensors and products with resolutions of 64MP and beyond, all of which are revolutionizing not just smartphones, but changing the face of the photographic industry.



And yet, its latest releases are little more than a tacit, token gesture to progress. Not only is Apple content to no longer lead the way, it has now become the contrarian underachiever that kicks the ground and shuffles in the other direction nonchalantly.

Where is the trailblazing, gun-toting, take-no-prisoners Apple? The Apple that transformed photography, the internet and social media all at the same time with the original iPhone? Yes, the world has changed and that

kind of paradigm shift is no longer possible. However, there is such a profound lack of ambition displayed in the iPhone 11 that it genuinely feels like the company can't be bothered any more.

Even the comparatively humble Motorola One Zoom features 4 cameras, a 48MP sensor and 10x zoom

Seriously. It's not enough that the iPhone 11 feels like yesterday's technology; even the big exclusive lead title for the new subscription-based Apple Arcade is Frogger. FROGGER. The company is literally going backwards. And aside from playing camera catch-up with the rest of the industry, its biggest innovation is the bloody "slofie".

It feels curmudgeonly to criticize the new iPhones when they are, as mentioned, Perfectly Acceptable Phones™. But there's just no escaping that Apple has plummeted to a lowly fourth place for smartphone market share – and if it keeps this same lack of ambition, there's nowhere to go but down.

So, would the iPhone 11 be irrelevant without the Apple logo? Honestly, we're not even sure it's relevant with it.

### Bill Vossler, The Azores, Land of Plenty.

Sitting a thousand miles from Portugal on the mid-Atlantic ridge, consisting of nine islands of volcanic origin--200 remnants alone on the main island of Sao Miguel--the Azores are the land of flowers, walls, lava, cows, mountains, tarns, and much more. Come see photos of Sao Miguel during a presentation by Bill Vossler at our Camera Club meeting.