

# THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



## The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 11, Issue 12

December 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

**Monday, December 2, 2019, 6:45pm—8:45pm**, Bremer Community 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.

**Monday, January 6, 2020, 6:45pm – 8:45pm**, Bremer Community Room 104, **Good Junque**, old stuff, rusty stuff, such as cars, a collection of things, tractors, kitchen utensils, wheels, etc.

**Monday, February x, 2020, 6:45pm - 8:45pm**, Bremer Community Room 104, **Patterns**, The main subject is created by using repeating lines triangles, squares, colors...



#### Inside this issue:

CLUB MEETING AND OTHER BITS OF INFORMATION	1
SHOOTING LONG EXPOSURES	1
DO YOU NEED AN EDITING CHECK LIST?	4
INTO THE COLD	5
LOOK OF THE GOLDEN HOUR	6

### Shooting Long Exposures

Mastering the art of long exposure is one of the essential skills in nature and landscape photography. If you want to demonstrate cloud drama, capture distant stars, or show motion of flowing water, you must first learn the fundamentals of long exposure photography. In this article, I'll show you my approach to waterfalls, including techniques which may be applied to other subjects that require extended shutter speeds. The discussion will focus on gear, camera settings, and in-field advice. I use Canon cameras and lenses and the gear.

#### The Gear I Use

Photographing flowing water is easy; capturing its beauty is extremely difficult. Using proper gear is the first step. It's not just about the camera and lenses. We must protect ourselves and our equipment; use filters to control light; and employ accessories to minimize potential frustrations. My main camera will be the Canon XS-50. The lenses I intend to carry are 16-35mm f/2.8 GM, 24-

70mm f/2.8 GM, and 100-400mm f/4.5 – 5.6 GM. I will use the ultrawide lens to capture the vastness of tall waterfalls and surrounding majestic landscapes, while the standard and telephotos lenses will allow me to photograph more intimate scenes including reflections and abstract patterns.

I have always carried a polarizer and neutral density filters when I know I'll be photographing water. For the first time, I have decided to take a combination polarizer and neutral density filter. This unusual but extremely helpful combination is made by Breakthrough Photography. The neutral density strengths are three and six stops. Having a single filter pulling double duty means minimal vignetting on my ultra-wide lens, no chance of stacked filters “sticking” together; and no condensation between filters.

My sturdy but lightweight Gitzo traveler tripod and Canon wireless remote shutter release will ensure rock-solid performance with virtually no chance of soft images due



# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Shooting Long Exposures (continued)



to camera shake. I recommend wireless over wired remote triggers because, when you're in a wet environment, it's best to keep the doors closed on your camera ports. Be sure to take a spare remote, just in case.

Some of my best compositions have come from inside a stream. It's a good idea to carry water shoes, at the very least. I usually also take chest-high waders with neoprene booties and dedicated water shoes which allow me to stay in cold water longer.

You may want to get very close to the water surface or waterfall. In such positions, water spray on the front element of your lens can be problematic. I recommend carrying a strong umbrella and plenty of microfiber cloths. Don't take the tiny ones for your lenses or sunglasses. There are bigger, more absorbent ones in the automotive section of most stores (e.g., Costco). Those are the ones you want. Finally, protect your camera and lens from inclement weather. I find a big, clear shower cap (like the ones you get for free at hotel rooms) does the trick quite well. If you're apprehensive about trusting your expensive gear to a flimsy piece of plastic, then companies like Peak Design and Think Tank have dedicated protective gear.

To edit my images on the road, I use a 15" MacBook Pro. However, in the field I backup my SD cards onto a 1TB Gnarbox 2.0 SSD device. It is extremely rugged and allows me to perform backups without a laptop, phone, or tablet. I have the option of using a USB 3.0 Type-C port or its built-in SD card reader.

The older I get and the more equipment I carry, the more I rely on solid hiking poles. They help ease pressure off your knees, provide stability when crossing slippery terrain, and even serve as makeshift tent poles! Here's a pro tip: Wrap some duct tape around your hiking poles. I can't tell you how many times duct tape has saved me. It's great for putting on a "hot spot" before a blister develops, wrap around a twisted ankle, or just fixing stuff like a ripped tent.

Make sure the camera bag you are carrying is sturdy and protects your gear from rain. I plan to take the Lowepro Whistler 450 AW II. It has convenient straps to carry my hiking poles and a separate, completely isolated compartment to put my wet clothes.

### Camera Settings For Waterfalls

How do you like your waterfall to look? Do you prefer crisp droplets or do you go gaga for that silky smooth, almost shaving-cream appearance? My taste is somewhere in the middle, usually obtained with shutter speeds between 1/2 and 2 seconds. I shoot waterfalls in aperture priority mode and prefer maximum depth of field, so I usually keep my aperture around f/8 or f/11. On most occasions, I try not to use f/16 or f/22 because such narrow apertures introduce diffraction associated softness to the overall image. One nota-

ble exception is if I have a point light source (such as the sun) in my frame which I want to render as a "starburst". In that case, I do utilize f/22. However, I capture another image at a more reasonable aperture and later combine the images in post-processing, blending the sun from the f/22 image with the rest of the scene shot at a wider aperture.

I start with the lowest native ISO, which on most full frame cameras is 100. Remember, the lowest native ISO has the most dynamic range. For example, let's say in aperture priority mode, I've chosen f/11 and ISO 100. When I half press the shutter button, the camera will let me know what it thinks the shutter speed should be to obtain the proper brightness (exposure) of the overall scene. If the shutter speed is outside my preferred range of 1/2 to 2 seconds, then I have some decisions to make. To continue this example, let's suppose the overall shutter speed was determined to be 1/8 second. That's 2 stops faster than my self-imposed minimum of 1/2 second. What to do? I refuse to narrow my aperture any further because I want to avoid diffraction associated softness. I also don't want to lower my ISO to less than 100 because those lower ISO values are simply digital manipulations (what's actually happening is the camera is taking an overexposed ISO 100 shot and lowering the brightness to simulate ISO 50 — this reduces the overall highlight dynamic

**MAKE SURE THE CAMERA BAG YOU ARE CARRYING IS STURDY AND PROTECTS YOUR GEAR FROM RAIN.**



range of the image). My only option is the put on a polarizer/ND filter. I have a 3 stop and a 6 stop. The 3 stop filter would lower my shutter speed to 1 second (perfect!). The 6 stop filter would lower my shutter speed to 8 seconds (way too long for my taste). Here's another scenario. Let's say the f/11 and ISO 100 combo yielded a shutter speed of 6 seconds. What should I do to get the shutter speed in my preferred range? In that situation, I'd boost the ISO, because noise in virtually a non-issue up to values of 1600 or 3200 on modern full-frame sensors. So, if I bump up the ISO to 400 (2 stops from ISO 100), the shutter speed will decrease to 1.5 seconds (2 stops faster than 6 seconds). Voila!

### In The Field

A tripod is essential to obtaining a shake free shot. However, it is also an obstacle to creativity and your ability to "see" all the possible angles. How many times have you done this: you arrive at a location, extend your tripod's legs, and proceeded to take images of the scene? Once you place the camera on a tripod, you limit yourself to a certain vertical perspective and compromise your mobility. Here's my advice. When you're ready to shoot, set aside the tripod, put the camera up to your eye and simply walk around, remembering to examine the scene from both high and low perspectives. A few steps left or right or a few inches up or down can completely change your view point, especially if you're shooting with an ultrawide angle lens. Once you've found that perfect position, then get your tripod.

When photographing flowing water, remember no two shots will look exactly the same as the pattern the water is constantly changing. Be sure to capture the scene multiple times, because you might like certain flow patterns over others. I also encourage you to experiment with various shutter speeds, depending on the velocity of the flowing water, presence of swirling foam or leaves, and the degree of turbulence. My advice above about 1/2 to 2 seconds is just a starting point and may not apply to every situation. You might never get another opportunity to come back to that location, so take as many shots as possible to cover all the possible angles and shutter speeds. "Film" is cheap! Often, what looks great on the camera's small LCD might not look so wonderful on your bigger screen at home or on the laptop.

More often than not, waterfalls are captured during overcast conditions and dim environments such as a forest. From the deep blacks of dark rocks to the bright whites of flowing water, the camera sensor is challenged with tremendous dynamic range. Therefore, I strongly encourage shooting in RAW and utilizing the histogram. I try to make sure the histogram curve is as centered as possible while minimizing the number of pixels that extend to the extreme right. I find it much easier to recover shadow detail than to bring information back from blow highlights. That's why I would rather capture a scene that is slightly underexposed than one that sacrifices highlight detail.

Unless a large part of your

scene includes the sky, use a polarizer. A polarizer will minimize glare from reflective surfaces such as water, foliage, and rocks to bring out more vibrant colors. This might seem like an obvious point to many, but is still worth stating: be sure to engage your polarizer! Just because you have a polarizer screwed on to the front of your lens does NOT mean it's engaged. You need to twist the polarizer while looking through the viewfinder to appreciate the effect. Also, if you change the angle of our perspective, you might need to adjust the polarizer to a slightly different position. Two occasions where you shouldn't use a polarizer or only partially engage it is if you want to capture rainbows or reflections on water.

### Conclusion

I hope this article has been helpful. I think you can appreciate that planning and preparation are essential to making compelling long essential images. The advice I've offered extends to other facets of long-exposure photography, including but not limited to astroscares, beachscapes, and cloudscapes. Proper gear and technique are crucial ingredients for success. Protect yourself and your gear, and be cognizant of your environment. Take lots of images and vary your perspectives. Most of all, have fun!



**MORE OFTER THAN NOT, WATERFALLS ARE CAPTURED DURING OVERCAST CONDITIONS AND DIM ENVIRONMENTS SUCH AS A FOREST.**



# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Do You Need An Editing Checklist?



FOR LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHERS, GRADUATED FILTERS ARE AN ABSOLUTE MUST HAVE..



It seems as though almost every time I ask one of my friends about a particular aspect of their photo, I usually hear the same reply: "I forgot" or "I didn't think of that." My answer is, typically, "make a checklist."

I'm a tech geek, software developer, and photographer. I live by my to do lists and checklists daily. Airline pilots and military maintenance personnel use checklists for a good reason: because they work. I used them when I was younger also, so it's not just an age thing. Maybe it's just something I learned when I was working on electronics back in the day.

Regardless of how much experience you have, there's always a chance you might forget an important step. I don't always reference a checklist for my photo editing now that I've been doing it long enough, but I do have checklists for things like providing photos to publishers and clients.

If you're new to photography, you might want to consider a checklist to ensure that you don't forget to do something with your photo while editing. After a while, it will become your natural workflow. Here are a few things that I suggest you put on that checklist.

### **Straighten and Crop**

Perhaps the most common mistake I see is the lack of straightening or cropping of a photo. I live along the shore of Lake Andrew, and many of the images I see daily are of the sunset at

the beach. Many of them have a crooked horizon; it's my pet peeve.

Here's a mockup of what I see on social media almost everyday: every photo is crooked.

Verticals should be vertical, and horizontals should be horizontal. Unless you're doing a dutch angle, learn how to straighten your image. It does not matter what genre of photography you're into; a slightly slanted image can have a significant effect on how people view your image, even if it's subconsciously.

No, your built-in camera level isn't accurate enough. Get it as close as you can in camera and then straighten it in post. Consider cropping the photo if there are any distracting intrusions along the edges like branches, trees, or rocks that are only partially visible.

### **Adjust White Balance**

White Balance can vary quite a bit depending on what you're photographing. Photographers shooting in a studio or taking portraits are going to want their white balance spot on, whereas someone shooting a sunset or wildlife may choose it to be cooler or warmer than it actually should be.

If you shoot in raw, you can change the white balance during post-processing without any repercussions as the white balance is applied when the raw file is rendered into an image for editing. A JPEG file has the

white balance baked into its color pallet and is much more challenging to correct in post.

### **Check the Exposure**

Yes, check the exposure. Your camera meter is just guessing, and there's always a chance the exposure needs a little tweaking, which is especially true if you have compensated for a dark or bright area of the scene.

This is also a good time to decide whether you want certain areas in silhouette or not, adjusting the shadows and highlights accordingly.

### **Sharpen and De-Noise**

Sharpening mistakes are generally in one of three areas: No sharpening at all, too much sharpening, or sharpening in the regions that shouldn't have sharpening applied.

Most of the time, you shouldn't apply sharpening evenly over the entire photo. Out of focus areas and areas without detail should not be sharpened, such as background blur and open spaces such as the clear sky. Learn to use a mask, and if you're using Lightroom Classic, use the masking slider.

In Lightroom, hold down the Alt key (Option on the Mac) while adjusting the Masking setting, the white areas will be the only areas that sharpening is applied to.

Noise reduction should balance with sharpening. Often there's no need to add as much noise reduction to areas with detail as you would to the background of an image.

## Check for Clipping

Highlight and shadow clipping is when these areas lose detail and become all one color. Sometimes you may intend for this to happen, such as when shooting products or people on a completely white or black background.

Having some clipping is just fine, such as in the sun or lights. You'll want to check for clipping not only as you edit but as one of the last steps while editing as the adjustments you make will affect the clipping.

## Check for Distractions

The littlest of things can distract a viewer of your image. It may be a branch, leaf, rock, bird, etc. I handle big distractions when I'm framing my composition in the field. I often remove small distractions while editing if they don't involve changing the main subject of the image.

Edge distractions are often overlooked by the photographer, as they are looking at the main part of the image. Viewers however are drawn

to these edge distractions as they are exploring the image and that takes their eye away from the main subject of the image.

## View at Various Sizes and With Different Backgrounds

A photograph can be perceived differently depending on its display size and background color. An image that looks great on a large 4K display can look quite different when displayed as a thumbnail or as a small image on a mobile device.

I always preview my photo at a minimal size in Lightroom, usually at 1:8 or 1:16 ratio. This minimum size gives me an excellent idea of how it might look on a phone or as a smaller image, such as a Facebook post.

I also preview the image with different background colors because the background can change the way you perceive an image. A large white background

can make some darker areas look almost black.

## Apply Corrections

One of the simplest things to overlook is applying corrections for chromatic aberration and lens profiles. If you're using Lightroom or Photoshop (Adobe RAW), these will be called "Remove Chromatic Aberration" and "Enable Profile Corrections."

One thing I do is create a preset that applies these and then select that preset during import. Lightroom will remember the last import preset you used, so the next time you import Lightroom will automatically select that preset the next time you import your photos, so it's hard to forget.

## Conclusion

Whether you're a novice or just forgetful, a checklist can be a useful tool to ensure you don't forget anything important. Depending on your type of photography, you may wish to add items to your checklist. For example, if you are doing portraits, you may want to add items for skin,



WHILE CLIPPED SHADOWS WILL HIGHLIGHT IN BLUE, CLIPPED HIGHLIGHTS WILL BECOME RED.

## Into The Cold

It's only a matter of time before we slip into colder and colder weather. A trip to winter wonderlands may also soon be in order. Some know how challenging can be to shoot in freezing temperatures.

Winter presents some of the most interesting scenes and visuals to photograph, so we understand why photographers take on the challenge of shooting in this season. Likewise, locations that are freezing cold or covered in

ice and snow most of the year (if not all of it), also have their own allure, especially for landscape and travel photographers. Preparation is key to shooting in the cold season.

Personal safety is of paramount importance. Before you prepare your gear, secure the details of your trip first. B&H stressed this in the tutorial paired with their photography cheat sheet, urging travelers to plan routes well, ensure

there are measures for keeping warm, and put together a list of other safety precautions.

When packing your gear, don't forget to bring extra batteries: cold weather causes batteries to discharge faster. A sturdy and reliable camera backpack is also essential to protect your gear from the harsh winter elements. Pack some airtight, resealable plastic bags to protect your camera from condensation. Bring some





CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Membership is \$25 per year. Members should provide: Email Address, Mailing Address, and Phone Number.

Camera Club Central Minnesota  
101 12th Ave. S  
Sartell, MN 56377

Newsletter Editor  
Richard D. Heath  
rheath@tds.net

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).

## Into The Cold (continued)



fingerless gloves as well: they will keep your hand warm but still allow full control over your camera.

Once you're out shooting, you have to keep your camera, flash, and batteries as warm as possible. You can keep your camera and flash under your coat and put your extra batteries in your pockets. When shooting, switch your white balance setting to "Cloudy" if you notice your photos looking too blue. Use a UV or clear filter over your lens to protect the front element from snow

or moisture. If you're shooting in a snowy spot, use exposure compensation if your camera's meter underexposes the scene. A lens hood on a sunny day in the snow will help avoid lens flare from the snow reflecting light.

Done with your shoot? While you're still outside, take out the memory card then place your camera inside the airtight plastic bag. This will cause the moisture to form on the outside of your bag and not in or around your camera.

## Look Of The Golden Hour



Everyone loves the look of the golden hour when shooting portraits. While it's always available for only a short period of time, don't worry: there's a way to get it at any time of the day. Best of all, this is NOT POSSIBLE IN PHOTOSHOP WITHOUT A LOT OF WORK! The reason for this is because you'll create an organically looking light in the scene and not just use a gradient. Here's how!

- We used:
- Profoto B10
- Orange gels
- Canon EOS R
- Canon RF 85mm f1.2 L USM

You start off looking at your scene and imagining where the sun would be coming from. Then, the light is placed in that spot. For the best effect, ensure that the light isn't visible in the scene. If you're using TTL, then

raise the power up a few stops. You'll get the most consistent output when shooting in manual mode and the trick is to position the light so it looks totally natural. To do this, look at your camera's light meter and either underexpose the image or balance it right to the middle indicator.

This is all working due to a combination of a few things:

Fast flash duration from a strobe. Flash duration tends to cut down ambient lighting.

A faster shutter speed tends to cut down ambient lighting too.

The orange gel on the flash makes it look like the sun. This is far better than what a gradient can do in Photoshop, Lightroom, or Capture One. You can see the sun organically hitting the subjects in areas that aren't possible in post-production without a lot of work.