



# the *Viewfinder*

the Newsletter of the Syosset Camera Club

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## **Sunday Morning Self Improvement Field Trip's** *Alan Agdern*

As you know, a group of us meets Sunday Morning's for breakfast prior to going out to take pictures. I recently read an article entitled "Get out of a Rut" by Lewis Kemper in the June 2004 Issue of PCPhoto magazine. In the article, Kemper describes a yearlong project that he undertook to develop his "Seeing Skills" and to practice using his equipment. Using Kemper's idea, one Sunday morning a month will be picked to visit the Massapequa Preserve. This site was selected because it is local, accessible and has great photographic potential. Participants will photograph the same area (anyplace in the preserve) once a month for a year with the goal of making two good images a month. When complete, each participant will assembled his or her images into an exhibition.

You are invited to visit the park with us Sunday mornings and at other times on your own. Don't worry about traveling light. Bring as all the equipment that you want to learn how to use properly and think you will need to produce the exceptional photographs that you are looking for.

We will be announcing a meeting to work out the details of how we will show our individual images at a meeting sometime next year.

Although I am proposing to have the group visit Massapequa Preserve once a month, for those you who cannot join us, feel free to do this project on your own.

The first Sunday trip is planned for September 19. We will meet for breakfast and go to Massapequa at 9:00 am. Future dates will be announced at upcoming meetings and in the Viewfinder.

### **Meeting Schedule**

#### **September 2004**

30th **"Winning Graphic Images"** presented by *Leon Hertzson*

#### **October 2004**

7th **Board Meeting**  
14th **Competition** judged by *Sherman Paur*  
21st **"Photo Montage 3D Assemblages"** presented by *Bill Grabowski*  
28th **"Using Photoshop Layers"** Presented by *Alan Agdern*

#### **November 2004**

4th **Competition** judged by *Louise Mellman*  
11th **Critique Night**  
18th **"Are You Ready to Compete?"** presented by *John Brokos*

#### **December 2004**

2cd **Competition** judged by *Mel Ettinger*  
9th **Photoshop Presentation** presented by *Yvonne Bassett Berger & Ilford*  
16th **Theme Competition "Trees"**

#### **January 2005**

6th **Board Meeting**  
13th **Competition** judged by *Leon Hertzson*  
20th **Critique Night**  
27th **"Compositions"** presented by *Dick Hunt*

#### **February**

10th **Competition** judged by *Dick Hunt*  
17th **"Black and White and the Digital Dark-room"** presented by *Bill Schmidt*  
24th **Program** to be announced

## **PRE-FOCUS** *Orrin Edwards*

I don't have an autofocus camera. How should I set my focus at the senior prom? Of course, if you had an autofocus camera, you don't have to do anything to get a sharp image. Just point at the couple you want to photograph, and shoot. The camera does the rest. But if you don't have autofocus, you have to focus on the dancing couple, and then shoot. With a fast-moving couple this can be tricky, especially if you have to reset the focus each time you shoot a different couple at a different distance. Simplify the evening by using what is called zone focusing. You can use zone focusing to shoot any event where the action is fast and the distance varies. It can be particularly useful at sports events. To zone-focus, first figure the range of distances at which you will shoot most pictures. Let's say you're standing on the dance floor, for example, and you calculate that you will be shooting your subjects from about four feet away to about ten feet. Fine. That's the "range." Set your focus in advance for a mid-point distance within this range and leave it there for all shots. In this example, you might set the focus for a distance of about six feet. Where should you set the distance? Set it for a distance that will include everything from the near point to the far point of your estimated range in the depth-of-field. In the good old days, you could easily figure out the correct distance by looking at the depth-of-field scale etched on the lens. But, most modern lenses don't show this scale, so you have to make an educated guess. You should select a distance about one-third back from the near point. For example, if you calculate your range at the dance to be five feet to twenty feet, focus about 10 feet away. Or, at a Basketball game if you figure your range to be 20 feet to 80 feet, focus about 40 feet away. If you're on the sidelines at a football game, and you figure the range is 10 feet to 70 feet, set your focus for about 30 feet

Of course, you can't be absolutely sure of good focus if you don't have a depth-of-field scale. But, by following this rule of thumb of one-third from near to far, you're pretty sure to get a reasonably sharp image. So set the distance, and keep it set. Whenever your subject enters the range you've calculated, you can shoot with reasonable confidence.

## **A TALE OF TWO "BILLS"** *Aileen Harrison*

Probably the best place to walk in comfort through a tidal marsh on the South Shore of Nassau County is at Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area. This is one of Nassau County's outstanding places to see bird life. Gerry, Ira and I found this out today first hand. The walk is about one mile and the walkways are either paved, or smooth shells, all level ground.

We met Ernie and Barbara Verdeschi who go every day and stand in the same spot waiting for an Osprey to appear. Marine biologist Michael Farina was very helpful in explaining the whys and wherefores of bird photography. You can see their work at [MNSA.webhop.org](http://MNSA.webhop.org).

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Bill Overton talked to us about the history and habits of all the birds in the place. He also offered to let the club into the area earlier than the general public. The best time to see some of the rare birds such as the clapper, Virginia rails and Wilson's phalarope among others is in June. We can arrange to have him open the gates as early as 5:30 on a Saturday morning depending on the tide. He will also take us to the best places to photograph.

The previous Sunday, Ira, Gerry & I went to the Bayard Cutting Arboretum. The Dahlias were magnificent. The weather was hot as blazes but it was worth being uncomfortable to be able to photograph such lovely flowers. Once again we met another "Bill", Bill Wolkoff, who is a volunteer there. We started to talk and before you knew it, he went into his car and brought out his camera and a portfolio of pictures of the Dahlias he had taken for the Dahlia Society. He too invited the club to photograph on a Monday when the place is actually closed. He would let us in, tripods and all. Cornell has a little laboratory very near the Dahlias where you can get cold fresh water and use the bathroom. Quite a sweet deal.

Gerry and I would be happy to arrange some field trips on weekdays or Saturdays next year. Some ideas are, a day trip on the Circle Line, the "Great Swamp" in New Jersey, or the Amish Country. We would like to have some input from you regarding these suggestions. How many would be interested, and where would they like to go. How many would go if it was during the week and how many would go on a Saturday.

## September Competition Results Judged by John Brokos

<b>Prints &amp; Slides of the Month</b>	
◆ Alan Agdern- B&W Class A	
◆ Aileen Harrison- B&W Class B	
◆ Bill Schmidt- Color Class A	
◆ Robert Glick- Color Class B	
◆ Eugene Fox- Slides Class A	
◆ Gerald Harrison- Slides Class B	

**Eight-** Robert Glick, Doug Going, Gerald Harrison, Loreta Lloyd

### Color Prints Class A

**Nine-** Clem Kleinmann

**Eight-** Alan Agdern, Orrin Edwards, Gerald Harrison

### Color Prints Class B

**Nine-** Barry Goldstein, Sarah Kleinmann, Alan Ross, Anita Sax

**Eight-** Melvyn Drossman, Carol Goldstein, Charles Hollander, Jerome Sax

### Color Slides Class A

**Nine-** Orrin Edwards, Stan Rothman

## Other Scores

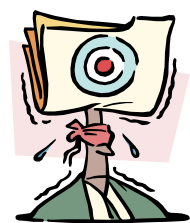
### Black & White Prints A

**Nine-** Clem Kleinmann, Ramesh Patwa, Marty Silverstein

**Eight-** Orrin Edwards, Barry Goldstein, Bill Schmidt

### Black & White Prints B

## The Camera/Eye Disconnect



Are you frequently surprised about how your photos look nothing like you had in mind when you took them? As an example, a few Sundays ago, we went to Gantry National Park in Queens. The place has just about everything a photographer could want. I took about 40 pictures none of which were worthy of competition. The previous Sunday, we went to Robert Moses State Park where I took only about 20 pictures and 5 were winners. So what went wrong? My theory is that Gantry Park presented a unique challenge in seeing. The compositional elements were different from what I

was used to. The images that I saw in the viewfinder were esthetically different from what appeared on the computer screen when I downloaded them. Could it be that my mind was embellishing the image seen in the finder? Was my eye capable of more tonal latitude than the camera? Was the act of taking the picture part of the experience that I was "seeing" in the viewfinder but not on the computer screen? Probably all of the above are true. Some people just have the talent for seeing potential photographs. For the rest of us, the remedy is practice. The Self Improvement Project outlined by Alan in the above article is about the best practice you can get.

Aside from perceptual issues, there are some significant technical ones. A lens has limited depth of field (a subject that has been covered in other viewfinder articles). The eye is no better, but the image focused by the eye is interpreted by the brain, so while your field of view contains only one plane of sharp focus, your brain temporarily ignores out of focus areas. As you move your gaze, the eye continuously refocuses, giving you the perception of a sharply focused world. When you view a photograph at normal viewing distance, you see the entire image at once on a flat plane. No amount of refocusing of your eyes will bring an out of focus background into focus. Of course, you may want the background in order to keep attention on the foreground.

Secondly, the latitude (degrees of brightness) that the film or sensor can capture is significantly less than the eye/brain is capable of. A landscape that includes a bright sun may have a luminance ratio from the brightest part of the scene to the deepest shadows of about 1,000,000:1 (about 17 f-stops). To make a print of this scene you would have to compress the entire scene into a range of about 7 f-stops or 128:1. Ansel Adams addressed this problem with his 'Zone System' where film and paper characteristics are matched to the exposure and development to capture detail in the full spectrum from absolute black to almost absolute white. In digital photography, the situation is easier to control. Using the levels and curves controls of your software, you can adjust each zone from black to white by observation. Not all digital cameras and scanners are equal with respect to their ability to reproduce the full tonality of nature. The good news is that almost all compare favorably with color slide film. With 6+ megapixels now available in most new models, resolution power has become less of an issue and the ability to capture subtle variations of color and tonality will be rivaling resolution as deciding factor in camera selection.

"Photography is a matter of putting your brain, your eye and your heart in the same line of sight."

*Henri Cartier-Bresson*

lection.

The factors that determine a good photograph are the same regardless of whether you are using film or a digital camera. With digital photography you no longer need to be concerned with the physics and chemistry of film, developer and paper, but the creation of a good photograph requires an understanding of the new tools, including but not limited to the camera. Understanding and using these tools while different, are just as important and even more powerful.

## **Antishake** The New Frontier?

No matter how steady you think you are, your camera does move when you take a picture. Fortunately, in most cases, the shutter speed and focal length are within the range of producing an acceptable amount of blur. Until the advent of vibration reducing optics from Canon, Nikon and Sigma, the only solution was to use a tripod. That is still the best advice but not always practical. The jury may still be out, but Konica/Minolta *seems* to have the ideal solution. The new Dynax 7 SLR applies antishake technology regardless of what lens is attached to the camera. This is because the antishake function is integrated into the sensor. Any lens that fits the camera becomes part of the anti-shake system. *Most modern cameras let you know when the shutter speed is too slow to*



*handhold the camera. The general rule is to shoot no slower than the reciprocal of the lens focal length. BUT- general rules are never absolute. Many great photographs have been taken with hand-held cameras using telephoto lenses at relatively slow speeds.*

## **Library Exhibit**

We will be exhibiting member's work at the Jericho Library for the entire month of December. Start now to frame your favorite three prints. Look for more information in next month's Viewfinder.

## **Free Offer Just come and get it!** Contact Orrin Edwards

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Get a Durst 606 photographic enlarger for 6x6 cm or 35mm negatives. You will also get a Componar 75mm lens, Spiratone 50mm lens, Voss 38mm lens, as-sorted color and variable contrast B&W filters, enlarger timer.

