the Viewfinder

the Newsletter of the Syosset Camera Club

Volume 37 Number 5 January 2006

President's Message

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To repeat the words of Dorothy in the "Wizard of Oz", there's no place like home. I can't report on any of the clubs doings since we were gone most of the month of November, but I can report on our vacation.

We arrived in Albuquerque for lunch on 11/3/05 and left the next morning for Santa Fe via the scenic route. The next day we drove to Taos, once again by the scenic route. The altitude got to Gerry and we went to the emergency room of the Taos Hospital. Fortunately it was nothing serious. We did want to get to Alamosa, Colorado to see the "Great Sand Dunes" and so we continued North to even higher elevations. This was in my estimation the highlight of the trip. I expect to show a number of my pictures in upcoming competitions. The dunes were very accessible and the lighting was great. After referencing altitudes at the local library, we decided the best place for us was to go back to the lower elevation of Albuquerque. We had over a week, till 11/14/05, when we would continue the trip with Russ Burdon, an exceptional photographer. The time spent in Albuquerque turned out to be interesting. They have a wonderful Museum of Natural History, Botanic Gardens, a great Zoo, and "Old Town" to shop in.

On 11/15/05 we left Albuquerque with Russ to check into a motel in Alamogordo, New Mexico. We were on the dunes in time for sunset. On 11/16/05, we were on the dunes before sunrise in White Sands. It was 17 degrees and operating the camera was difficult. Our early entry allowed us to photograph the full moon in all it's glory as it sets over the dunes, then back at sunset to see the beautiful pink glow on the mountains surrounding the dunes .We repeated this program, going to different spots, till 11/19/05, when we drove to Bosque Del Apache. For three days we shot sunrise and sunset. This is a manmade preserve for Snow geese and Cranes. In the summer, corn is grown in the fields and in November water from the Rio Grande is diverted to form swamps for the birds. The birds spend the night in the ponds to avoid being eaten by coyotes At the crack of sunrise, as if by a signal, thousands of birds take flight. The sight is awesome. I got so excited by the sight, I forgot to push the button and of course Gerry's battery died at that moment.

Competition results on page 6

I only hope Gerry and I will be well enough to take another trip with Russ. His website is rburden@ecentral.com.

Meeting Schedule

POB Community Center
Meetings start at 7:30 pm
http- //www.syossetcc.org

December

12/15	Presentation by Dick Hunt, "Composition"
12/22	Presentation by Alan Agdern, "Exposure"

January

1/5	BOARD MEETING
1/1 2	Competition judged by Leon Hertzson
1/19	Presentation by Leon Hertzson
1/26	Critique Night

February

2/9	Competition judged by Ed Sambolin
2/16	Presentation by Bill Rudock, "Landscapes."
2/23	Theme Competition "Eyes" judged by Arnold Brower

March

3/9	Competition judged by Richard Hunt
3/16	Presentation by Bill Overton of Oceanside Marine Nature Center
3/23	Presentation by Bill Schmidt

April

4/6	BOARD MEETING
4/13	Competition judged by Barry Kurek
4/20	Presentation by Ivan Rothman, The Falkland Islands
4/27	Theme Competition "Architecture" Judged by Dave Green

May

5/11	Competition judged by Art Inselsberger
5/18	Presentation by Tom Mantana, "Travel."
5/25	End of Year Competition judged by Mel Ettinger, Sherman Paur and Andrew Kurchey

June

6/16	end of year Honors Award Dinner at the Milleridge Inn 6/16

Secrets of the Curve Control

Imagine if you will, a control so powerful and universal that you could selectively control the tonal range of your photograph in the shadows, the highlights and in the neutral tones, whether black and white or color. Suppose further, that you could simultaneously control the brightness and contrast all by inspection. This would be a tool that Ansel Adams would have given his 8x10 view camera for. But there it is in Photoshop collection of standard tools and in most other robust editing software. Sorry, it's not in Photoshop Elements. It is used widely by pros, but less often by amateurs through lack of understanding. The Curve Tool can substitute for the levels control, the contrast control and the brightness control all at the same time. This article will just touch on the most basic uses of the Curve Tool. Once you get comfortable with it, you will want to explore the other capabilities. They are just too good not to.

The so called curve starts out as a straight line to indicate that there have been no changes This line actually maps input values to output values in a direct one to one fashion. Each input value between 0 and 255 maps to an output value, resulting in the diagonal shape. If you want to know where any point in an image falls, just hold down the left mouse button which turns the cursor into an eyedropper. As you move the eyedropper over the image, the point on the curve mapping that brightness value will appear as a little circle on the line. By holding down the ctrl key and clicking, you will place a control point on the line which can be dragged to change the line into a curve. Any number of control points can be created. Increasing the slope of the curve increases contrast. Decreasing the slope does just the opposite. You can change all the tonal values or apply it selectively. Moving that part of the line up or down will increase or decrease the brightness of all similar pixels in the image.

Levels is basically a watered down version of the Curves Control with only a single control point in the middle. Curves allows you to place any number of control points where you need them. Since slope equals contrast, you can place points so as to increase slope in the shadow and highlight areas, reducing the slope in the mid-tones in favor of improving shadow detail.

Keep in mind that you can apply the curves tool to individual layers or to a selection within a layer for an unlimited range of effects and subtle control of tonality.

The following is a "down and dirty" demonstration of the control.

Continued on page 3

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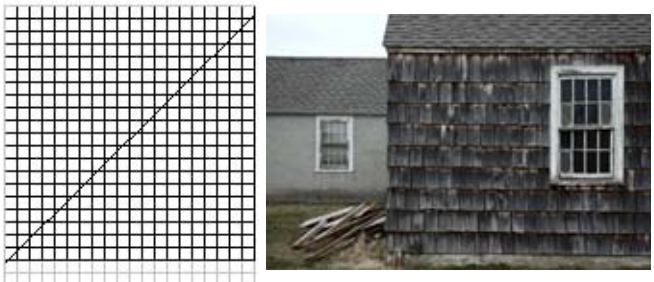
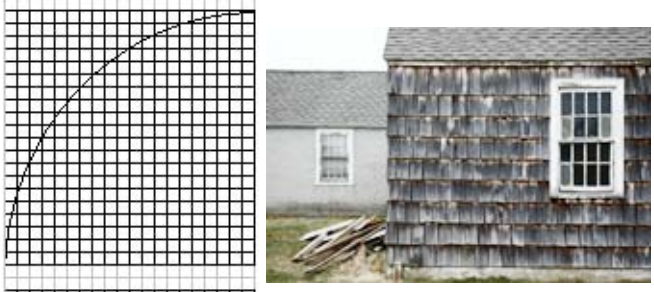
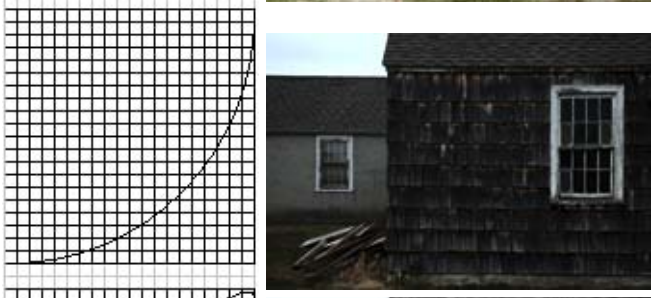


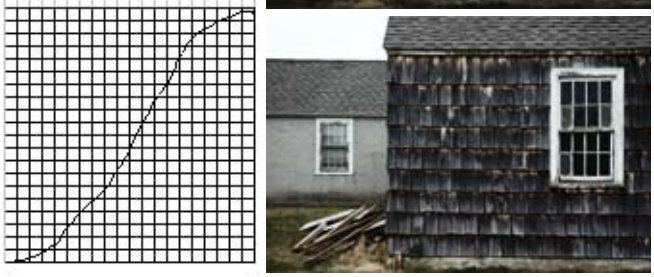
1. Original image. OK, but a little flat.



2. By clicking on the center of the line and pushing up with mouse, the line turns into a curve whose slope is increased for the blackest to the midtone areas and decreased for the lightest to the midtones, producing a higher "key" image with compressed blacks and expanded whites..



3. By clicking on the center of the line and pulling down with mouse, the line turns into a curve whose slope is decreased for the blackest to the midtone areas and increased for the lightest to the midtones, producing a lower "key" image with low contrast in the blacks and high contrast in the whites.



4. By moving the upper half of the curve as shown in (2) above and moving the lower half as shown in (3), both the whites and blacks are accentuated. Overall contrast is increased and the image has more "snap."

Corrected November SCC Competition Results

Print of the Month in Color Prints- A category went to Peter Metzger for the second month in a row (not Peter Newman). Also, Sy Roth got a 9 which was not reported.

Picasa Upgrade Available

Version 2.1 now includes support for RAW files for all cameras. In addition, added functionality for publication of images to weblogs and the generation of CD covers.

Slide Cleaning Tip

Ok, so you know that slides should be stored in a cool dark place, but things happen. It's easy to keep them dust free, but fungus is a common problem as seen in some recent slide competitions. Fortunately, there is a cure for all but the worst cases. Simply clean them with a cotton ball moistened with alcohol. DO NOT USE RUBBING ALCOHOL. Alcohol intended for antiseptic and rubbing use contains 30% water and slides damaged by fungus will not tolerate water. Although hard to find, 99% alcohol can be obtained from most pharmacies and you can get away with the 1% water.

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Giotto Pocket Rocket Cleaning Kit	$19.99

Learn Nature Photography

Saturday November 5th

Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center on Cove Road in Oyster Bay.

Nature Shoot & Photo Seminar
9am-12 noon

If you ever wanted to learn how to take great nature photographs, let us show you how. During this clinic, the nature experts at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary & Audubon Center will lead a tour through their beautiful grounds while the specialized staff of Berger Bros Camera Exchange will explain which equipment is needed for nature photography and how to set up for a great picture along with photo tips and advice. Spend the morning learning new photo skills, and meeting new people with similar interests while relaxing in the fresh air and sunshine.
The event is free, however a $10 donation is requested to the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary to help fund the Audubon's mission to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats.
Registration through Berger Bros is required.

to be followed by

Photography Workshop & Photoshop Seminar
12 noon

Enjoy learning photography in a natural outdoor setting with the guidance of professional photographers and demonstrations of equipment.
Start the day in the field learning shooting techniques including depth-of-field, composition, lighting and macro photography. Followed by a brief working lunch.The afternoon session will target digital workflow, editing techniques, printing and file management using Adobe Photoshop. Both workshops will be conducted by Yvonne Bassett-Berger, a professional photographer and Photoshop instructor. **CLASS FEE: $100 - Includes worksheets and lunch. Photoshop seminar questions can be sent to Yvonne at: ybassettstudios@aol.com.**

Advanced Photoshop Seminar

Saturday, November 19th Syosset
10:00am to 2:00pm

Learn advanced Photoshop & Printing techniques to enhance and correct your digital photographs. Topics include Adobe Camera Raw and Introduction to color management. Perfect for current Photoshop users and those who haven taken our Photoshop Workshop. (See Above for Beginner class)
Class Fee: $100 - Includes Worksheets and Lunch. Seminar will be conducted by Yvonne Bassett-Berger, a professional photographer and photoshop instructor. Please send questions regarding this seminar, or private photoshop lessons to Yvonne at: ybassettstudios@aol.com.

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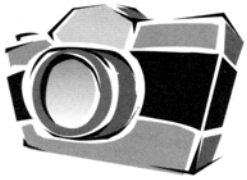

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SCC December Competition
Top Scores
Judged by: Adolfo Briceno

Black and White - A

Nines

Silverstein, Marty- Print of the Month

Agdern, Alan
Glick, Robert

Eights

Harrison, Gerald
Markewitz, Moshe

Black and White - B

Nines

Weisler, Jules- Print of the Month

Eights

Lloyd, Loretta
Scheinerman, Ira
Tropper, Mat

Color- A

Nines

Ross, Alan – Print of the Month

Glick, Robert
Newman, Peter
Patwa, Ramesh
Roth, Seymour

Eights

Agdern, Alan
Metzger, Peter

Color- B

Nines

Silverstein, Marty- Print of the Month

Harrison, Aileen
Herbst, Al
Kaplow, Mike
Rothman, Stan
Sax, Anita
Tropper, Mat
Weisler, Jules

Eights

Goldstein, Barry
Goldstein, Carol
Hoffer, David
Hollander, Charles
Lloyd, Loretta
Sax, Jerome
Sunshine, Ira

Slides A

Nine

Patwa, Ramesh- Slide of the Month

Slides B

Nine

Volin, Linda- Slide of the Month

Point and Shoot Tips

Warming without a filter- Changing the white balance from `auto` to `cloudy`. It is like using a warming filter.

Polarizer substitute- a pair of polarized sunglasses can substitute for a polarizer. Place one of the lenses in front of the camera lens. The polarizing effect is best when the light is at a 90° angle from the subject.

Use fill flash- In fill flash mode, the camera exposes for the background, then adds enough flash to illuminate the foreground. The result is an evenly light photo with good detail in the shadows.

Macro mode- Use the `close up` mode to explore the world in detail. Remember that you have very shallow depth of field when working close, so focus on the part of the subject that's most important and use a small aperture.

Keep it straight- If you have trouble getting the horizon straight, take multiple exposures until you get it right. Eventually, you will learn to coordinate the LCD image with a straight horizon.

Massive media card- Don't skimp on memory. As a rule of thumb, for a 3 megapixel camera get at least a 256MB card, 512MBs for 4 and 6 mp models.

Use the resolution you paid for- You never know when a shot will be worthy of high enlargement or severe cropping, so shoot at the highest resolution setting and highest quality compression.

Use a tripod Tripods tend to be unwieldy and heavy, but there are small and lightweight alternatives. With relatively flimsy models, set the camera's self timer so you can make the exposure hands off.

Slow motion water You can get a great effect when photography running water by using long exposures (1 sec or longer) with a tripod mounted camera.

PFLI Scores for December
Judges - Mary Ruppert, Art Inselsbe
And Joanna Gazzola

B & W - B

23 Peter Metzger; 'Porvo Mime'
22 Matthew Trooper; 'Peek A Boo'
21 Al Herbst; 'Nautical Ropes'

SLIDES - A

24 Ramesh Patwah; 'Iceberg'

B & W - A

27 Marty Silverstein; 'Over The Top'
25 Pat Newman; '6 Of The Bravest'
24 Robert Glick; 'Hungry Gator'
23 Alan Agdern; 'Photographer In Park
22 Bill Schmidt; 'Mormon Row Barn'

COLOR - A

24 Peter Metzger; 'Foreigner'
24 Sy Roth; 'Row Boat At Pier 2'
23 Moshe Markewitz; 'David & Goliath'
22 Ramesh Patwah; 'Enjoying View'

COLOR - B

25 Ed Starling; 'Sunset Race'
24 Matthew Tropper; 'Pride Of Alaska'
23 Stan Rothman; 'Girl In Surf'
22 Marty Silverstein; 'Lily Pond 3'
22 Peter Newman; 'Purple Passion'
22 Sarah Kleinmann; 'Fall Splendor'
21 Jules Weisler; 'IBM Plaza'
21 Maylan Monahan; 'Beach Flooded'
21 Al Herbst; 'All That Remains'

Congratulations to Marty Silverstein for cracking the 27 barrier at the December PFLI Competition with his "Over the Top" Photograph.