



# the Viewfinder

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## President's Message

Linda Volin

Here I am, seated in an airplane zooming across the beautiful landscapes of our country, while recalling the outstanding landscape photography of Ansel Adams. With his keen eye, 4x5 view camera and his trusty tripods, he had remarkable control of depth of field and size relationships in each landscape photograph.

With today's digital SLR camera, photographers can be enabled to achieve results similar to those Ansel Adams mastered with his view camera. Today, there are perspective-control or tilt-shift lenses for major brand SLR cameras. By using tilt-shift - perspective-control lenses, it is possible to successfully put all objects such as tall trees and buildings, in the frame. There would be no distortion or trapezoid-type views, known as the "Keystone Effect" that usually result from using regular lenses and tilted cameras.

As the photographer contemplates the use of these recently developed lenses, there are important considerations. He or she must utilize the depth of field preview and adjust the aperture. A negative side to these lenses is that they require manual manipulation. There are no automatic functioning capabilities for focusing or metering. Another possible disadvantage to photographers using the tilt function is that refocusing is necessary. The lens is unable to keep the original focus set before tilting.

After assessing the merits of the new tilt-lenses and the possibilities of taking Ansel Adams-like photographs, any small disadvantages would seem unimportant to the serious landscape photographer. This lens invention would seem to make a perfect addition to a camera enthusiast's collection of items. Oops- I'm missing some skyscape photo opportunities. Here comes my point and shoot camera.

Happy Halloween picture-taking!

## Program 2009 - 10

### October

15 "China" - presentation by Jules Weisler

22 Michael Fairchild

### November

5 Board Meeting

12 Competition- Leon Hertzon

19 Theme "Competition: Machines & Tools" judged by Andrew Kirchey

### December

3 Lighting Workshop- Presented by Steve Schwartz

10 Competition- Pat Walsh

17 Understanding and Using Photo-shop Blending- Yossi Manor

### January: Exhibition at Jericho Library, 1/1/10 – 1/31/10

14 Competition- Ken Bausert

21 Program to T.B.A.

28 Program to T.B.A.

### February

11 Competition- Barry Kurik

18 Program to T.B.A.

25 Program to T.B.A.

### March

4 Board Meeting

11 Competition- Laura Eppig

18 Program to T.B.A.

25 Program to T.B.A.

### April

8 Competition

15 Program to T.B.A.

22 Program to T.B.A.

### May

13 Competition- Art Inselsberger

20 Program to T.B.A.

27 End of Year Competition

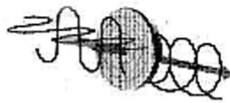
# Polarizers Revisited

*What you should know*

Much of the material for this article is taken from the May '05 Viewfinder. Because of the importance of this ubiquitous filter, your Editor thought it would be a good idea to repeat it in updated form. First, contrary to what you might have heard, the effects of a polarizer cannot be duplicated in Photoshop.



Before the digital era, filters got as much attention as lens selection, especially for black and white photography, but since most black and white work is now done as a conversion from a color image with extraordinary control, the need for most color balancing and contrast manipulating filters is pretty much gone with two notable exceptions; the polarizer and the neutral density filter in its various incarnations. If you could only take one filter with you, it would have to be a polarizer. But wait! There are available, combination variable neutral density filters from 2 to 8 stops and polarizer all in one unit. The downside is the price- about \$400 for the Sing Ray unit. A less expensive one made by Light Craft Workshop can be had for \$109. These basically work by stacking two polarizers together.



Circular  
Polarizer



Linear  
Polarizer

**Some background-** With the exception of lasers, all light sources including the sun are un-polarized. Metallic and other surfaces that produce glare, such as car windshields, water, etc., reflect polarized light. It is the polarization that gives us control over such light through the use of a polarizing filter. The filter can saturate color, and improve detail by reducing the stray light caused by reflections. Polarizers can work wonders by darkening skies and defining clouds. Unlike other filters, polarizers are not passive pieces of colored glass. In order to work, they must be correctly oriented in relation to the light (more about that later). In addition, the light reaching the camera must be at least partially polarized.

## Circular vs. Linear Polarization

This is important stuff- pay attention. There are two types of polarizers; Linear and Circular (CPL). Un-reflected light oscillates in all planes perpendicular to its direction of travel. Polarized light on the other hand is light that oscillates in a single plane only. The traditional polarizer is a linear one. Linear polarizers will only let light waves pass that are in alignment with the direction of the filters invisible crystal-line grid-like structure. A circular polarizer is more complex and more expensive. By using a second element called a 'quarter wave retarder' behind the front polarizing element, the light leaving the device will pose no problem to the auto focus and exposure meter sensors. Further explanation of the physics is too complex for a newsletter. I refer you to Wikipedia and other sources if you are curious. With either type of polarizer, turning the filter in its mount adjusts the quantity of polarized light that will be transmitted to the camera lens. When adjusted to maximum blocking effect, additional exposure will be needed, usually about 1 f-stop. Fortunately, automatic exposure systems do a good job of assessing the exposure. Linear polarizers are actually a bit more effective than circular ones and a lot less expensive- BUT they are not compatible with the sensors for focusing and exposure control of modern cameras. Check your camera's manual or contact the manufacturer to determine whether or not you can use a linear polarizer. Since a polarizer is expensive it makes sense to buy one that fits your largest diameter lens and use step-down rings to adapt it to smaller diameter lenses. In this way, you will need to own only one.

### Rule of Thumb (literally)

Point your index finger at the sun. With your thumb extended at a right angle, rotate it around the axis of the index finger (try not to let people see what you are doing, they'll think you're nuts). Your thumb will point out the band of greatest polarization effect.



### Useful Tip

If a polarizer is a circular type, it should say so on the mount. If you are unsure of the type of polarizer you have, simply hold it up to a mirror. If the areas where the filter and its mirror image overlap appear black, turn the filter around, if the overlapping area is now clear, it's a circular polarizer. If the overlapping area is clear in either orientation the filter is a linear one.

Glare reduction translates into dramatically higher saturation and contrast and more apparent sharpness. The effect is variable depending upon the camera position relative to the light source and the physical nature of the elements in the scene being photographed.

With an SLR, you can judge the effect of the filter on the sky through the viewfinder. As you look at the composition, turn the filter to see the effect. With a non-SLR digital camera, you will need to shield the LCD in order to see the effect.

You could leave a polarizer on the camera all the time in much the same way, as you would use a skylight filter to protect your lens. The problems are that you lose between about 1 to 2 f-stops depending on the amount of polarized light and there are times when glare and/or reflections are desired in the composition. In the absence of polarized light, a polarizer is nothing more than a 1 to 2-stop neutral density (ND) filter. That brings up another use. When you want to reduce depth of field by using your widest aperture and there is just too much light for that, the polarizer may give you the amount of light attenuation that you need. If an ND effect isn't what you're after, a polarizer won't do you any good in un-polarized light.

Many modern lenses have front elements that do not rotate when focusing. That is an important advantage and a point to check when purchasing a lens. If the front element does rotate, you will have to readjust the polarizer every time the lens focuses. Also, because polarizers have a thicker mount than ordinary filters, beware of vignetting on wide-angle settings. This is not a problem if you are using an oversized filter with a step-down ring. Alternatively, you can buy a filter that has a relatively thin mount, but it will cost you more money.

## Musings and Rantings

- Remember when summer was the season of photography? Maybe because it was more comfortable to be outside or there was more time for it. Remember when you daydreamed about those gleaming Kodak folding cameras like the Tourist in the drug store window, with its cool leather case, the Retina that you could fold into your pocket and even a Kodak Twin Reflex that passed for a poor-mans Rolieflex. Remember the settings on some of the cameras? If it was cloudy, you set the aperture to the cloudy icon, and then you focused. It was 1.5-3 ft, 3-20ft or infinity (or something like that). Amazingly, we often got good pictures. Pictures that in fact will serve as history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> for coming generations. All the seasons are in fact good for photography, but summer just seemed right. I don't know about the rest of you, but now that I have all the gadgets and gizmos that go along with my DSLR with the 18-270mm1:3.5-6.3 zoom lens with 3 stop VR, 52 zone computerized autofocus with facial recognition and tracking, two mode spot and matrix metering, variable-speed motor advance, ISO to 6400, in camera editing, and the list goes on, I have not taken a better photograph. I have taken technically better pictures but not a better photograph. Someday when you feel like reliving the past, set your camera on manual everything, mount an old fashioned 35 or 50mm lens and take some really great pictures of nothing much in particular.
- What's the story with the Lensbaby? In my opinion it is more of a marketing coup than photographic advance. Mainstream



photography has moved away from view cameras with tilt and shift capabilities in favor of small maneuverable cameras three-quarters of a century ago. For those who need selective depth of field and perspective control, there are the excellent tilt/shift lenses available. We now have people attaching these crude lenses to their megabuck cameras that are the optical equivalent of one or two element Brownie lens on the end of a plastic hose. It doesn't even have an iris diaphragm. If that's the optical quality you want, I've got some stuff in the basement that may be of interest to you. Or better yet, you could build a pin-hole camera and have some real fun.

- I have considered canceling my subscriptions to photography magazines. At one time they were useful journals with articles on new techniques or even helpful reviews of the basics. But they

seemed to have turned into travel brochures and serve as 'shills' for their advertisers. As a general rule, the photographs contained within aren't even exceptional. The majority of "articles" are nothing more than transparent lists of accessories that you are exhorted to buy. You can't even get a fair comparison of features most of the time. The most recent issue of Outdoor Photography has an article on accessories that showcases items in various categories such as filters, flashes, tripods, etc. with no guidance to the reader on which to select or why. The section on tripods for example, lists all the brands but neglects to include the prices or comparative features. You have to find the Adorama add to discover that their 'Flashpoint' carbon fiber tripod is about half the price of the competitors for comparable quality.

## October Competition Scores

<b>B&amp;W PRINTS -AA</b>		<b>COLOR PRINTS- B</b>	
Silverstein, Marty	10	DeSantis, Joseph	6
<b>B&amp;W PRINTS - A</b>		Ettinger, Burton	8
Agdern, Alan	10	Ferrara, Chris	10
DeBiase, Valerie	7	Herbst, Al	7
Goldstein, Barry	8	Rose, Doreen	8
Newman, Peter	7	Weisler, Jules	8
Scheinerman, Ira	7	<b>Projection-AA</b>	
Volin, Linda	7	Silverstein, Marty	10
Weisler, Jules	7	<b>PROJECTION- A</b>	
<b>B&amp;W PRINTS- B</b>		Bowie, Bill	7
Bowie, Bill	9	Ferrara, Chris	10
Ettinger, Burton	8	Goldstein, Barry	7
Rose, Doreen	8	Goldstein, Carol	7
<b>COLOR PRINTS- AA</b>		Markewitz, Moshe	6
Silverstein, Marty	10	Newman, Peter	8
<b>COLOR PRINTS- A</b>		Patwa, Ramesh	9
Agdern, Alan	9	Scheinerman, Ira	7
Bowie, Bill	9	Weisler, Jules	9
DeBiase, Valerie	10	<b>PROJECTION- B</b>	
Goldstein, Barry	7	Volin, Linda	9
Klosner, Irv	6	Woulfin, Gerald	7
Markewitz, Moshe	8		
Newman, Peter	9		
Patwa, Ramesh	7		
Ross, Alan	6		
Scheinerman, Ira	9		
Starling, Edward	9		

## Wanted

Delegate to attend PFLI Board meetings and report back to the club.

Also, contact our new Program Chairpersons, Burt Ettinger or Peter Metzger if you have a presentation that you would like to give or even a concept that someone else may like to present.

## Explaining Shutter Delay

All digital cameras have shutter delay (the time between pushing the shutter button and the shutter opening) even SLRs. The delay is so short in modern SLR cameras however, that it ceases to be an issue. Point and shoot cameras however, are another issue.

There are two levels of delay. The initial delay which is caused by the camera achieving autofocus, determining exposure and white balance and to a lesser extent, preparing the sensor for exposure. The second level is that between exposures which is mainly controlled by the speed of the camera's processor and the write speed of the memory card. You can significantly reduce delay by pre-focusing holding down the shutter half way to focus the lens in advance of the exposure. For action shots,

pan with action. Use a fast SD card- this is a factor if you are taking pictures in burst mode.

## FREE PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES

Presented by the PFLI In Partnership with the Plainview-Old Bethpage Library. All Classes are from 2 PM - 4:15 PM at the Library

**Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>**- **"the Key to Great Photographs"** by Dick Hunt- covers 25 major photography tips and techniques.

**Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>** **"Understanding and Breaking the Rules of Composition to Create Images Beyond the Ordinary"** by Andreas Rentsch

**Part One** –demystifying rules and factors that are crucial to a successful photograph. **Part Two** - the importance of light and how to use it creatively.

**Feb, 28<sup>th</sup>** **"Alternative Visions"** by Gabriel Biderman - Travel and Fine Art Photographer

**Part One** -Finding the sweet spot - featuring the lensbaby **Part Two** – The fine art of the long exposure.

**Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>** **"All about Digital Infrared"** by Steve Zimic - **Part One** - "Shooting and Processing Infrared Images"  
**Part Two** - "Cameras That Can Shoot in Infrared."

**APR. 25<sup>th</sup>** **"Five Points of View"** by Five Photographers from the Digital Photo Academy Five photographers will discuss their work and give us an insight into their creative thinking and their approach to photographic problems.

**MAY 23<sup>rd</sup>** **"Beyond the High Dynamic Range Image:"** by Dan Burkholder - Teacher, Photographer, Author Adventures in Luminosity and other Tone Enhancing Techniques.

**JUNE 27<sup>th</sup>** **"Having Fun With Photoshop"** by Joanna Gazzola - Graphic Designer, Photographer Take your photographs into another dimension with various Photoshop techniques and create "Photo Art".

### PFLI Calendar of Events

- **Photorama** at Planting Fields- Sunday, 10/18
- Sunday **Educational Programs** at Plainview Library: 1/11, 11/22, 1/17/2010, 2/28, 3/21
- Friday **Competitions** and Plainview Library
- 10/16, 11/13, 12/4, 1/8, 2/12, 3/12, 4/9