FLASH

2015

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dinner   *by Peter Florczak*

**NOVEMBER
& DECEMBER
WINNERS**

Southern Alps   *by Mary Hunsicker*

See more of our photos online at http://www.gsacc.org/photo-gallery.html
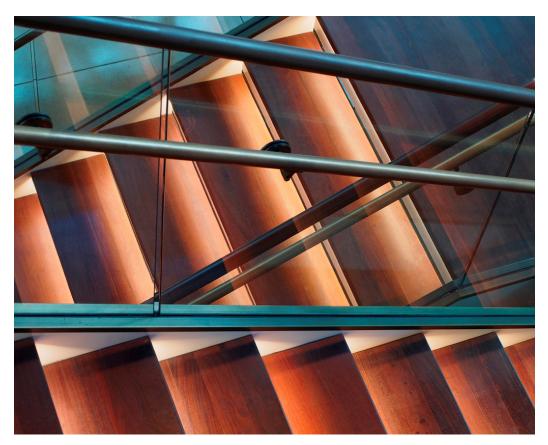
Remembering John Kelley

BY ADAM KINCHER

   As I was preparing to print this issue, I received an e-mail from Pinky Rudolph advising me that GSACC member John Kelley passed away in his home unexpectedly on the final weekend of 2014.

   I am sorry for his family's loss, and to the Rudolphs for the loss of their good friend. GSACC has lost a talented photographer.

   Here are two of John's images that I liked. At right is "Geometry". The strong lines throughout make this image visually interesting. Below is "The Good Book Sayeth". The humor in this image is obvious.

   John's eye for memorable images will be missed.

Dues are due this month

Just a reminder: Your annual GSACC dues are due in January. You must pay dues and remain a member in good standing to be eligible to participate in GSACC's competitions. A membership form is at the bottom of this page. Forms are also available on our web site: http://www.gsacc.org/joining--contacting-gsacc.html

Please mail dues to our new Treasurer:

Peter Florczak
729 Deer Creek East
Pipe Creek, TX 78063

Dues may also be mailed to our post office box. That address is listed on the back page of this issue.

Assignment list for 2015-16 announced

The 2015-16 assignment list is now available. Remember, all entries that are submitted for these assignments must be images that were taken after December 1, 2014. Thank you to Tim Kirkland for creating this list.

Please remember that assignment entries must be in the same format as the other entries for the competition month (prints for print months and digital for digital month).

2015:

April: Rustic: Weathered wood, rusty iron, peeling paint, dilapidated buildings, etc. Look for the old barns, cars, logs, etc.

May: Day at the beach (lake, river or pool): Activities associated with those watery places.
June: The ride: Boat, burro or Boeing 747, show something people ride in or on. Include people .
July: Other sports: Photos of an Olympic recognized sport but NOT football, baseball or basketball.
August: Industry/construction: Show people in construction or industrial activity.
September: The bridge: Get an unusual or artistic picture of a bridge.
October: Get spooked: Make an image suitable for Halloween.
November: Famous art: Create a photo interpretation of a famous work of art but without that item in the picture.
December: Curves: Find a subject containing major curves.

2016:

January: Motion: Subject should show evidence of motion.
February: Long shadows: Have long shadows as part of the subject.
March: Fruit: Get creative with fruit, a part or plenty of it.

MEMBER INFORMATION:

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE NUMBER(S)_____

E-MAIL_____

CIRCLE ONE:

INDIVIDUAL   FAMILY   STUDENT/NON-TRADITIONAL   JUNIOR

Rates: Individual: $30/year. Couples/family: $40/year. Student/non-traditional: $15/year. Junior (junior high and below) $6/year. Dues are half of the above when joining in July or later.

Bill's Photography Tips & Tricks

BY WILLIAM HUNSICKER
whunsickerii@gmail.com

Dynamic range, gradient ND filters and how they are used

Gradient ND filters are used to reduce the effective dynamic range of the scene being captured (i.e: darken a bright part of the image, like the sky). Dynamic range is the range of brightness in the scene you are trying to photograph. There are several ways to control the dynamic range of the capture, but GND's are one of the oldest and best. The human eye can distinguish luminosity (or brightness) over a dynamic range of nearly 24 f-stops, but depending on brightness and contrast of the specific scene, we can often only clearly distinguish about an 11 to 14 stops. (For a detailed discussions see Cambridge in Color - http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/dynamic-range.htm). Camera sensors are more limited.

Modern camera sensors, under the best of test conditions, can now handle a dynamic range between 10 and 14stops. However, this is becomes only 8 to 12 stops in the field due to various analog to digital (A/D) conversion effects, ISO settings, etc. (See DxOMark Camera Sensor ratings -http://www.dxomark.com/Cameras/Ratings/Landscape). Still, they are tremendously better than even a few years ago. Today, Nikon and Sony seem to be leading the way in extending sensor dynamic range, but they're not yet as good as the human eye!! Your camera's histogram shows the effective range of your camera's sensor. Learning to fit the range of the scene into your sensor range is critical.

While I am sure other vendors have developed equivalent capabilities, I use a Canon, so I will speak to that. Canon has taken an additional 'firmware' approach to achieving a wider dynamic capture range with a built-in function called Auto Lighting Optimizer (ALO). In newer Canon cameras, the default is for ALO to be set to "On-standard". The ALO function is applied to your image before saving it, even in RAW! And ALO can be extremely effective in high-contrast environments. However, as it brightens the darker areas of your image and decreases contrast, it may also increase noise, so you might want to turn it off in some situations. You should learn to look at your "Live View" to determine the effect ALO has on your image.

Yet, another firmware function in newer Canon cameras, also intended to help with dynamic range concerns, is the Highlight Tone Priority (HTP). It is used to improve 'detail' in the bright areas of the image when you need your histogram adjusted toward the left side. It also affects the RAW format as it limits the ISO setting to 200 or higher. You cannot set both ALO and HTP at the same time.

High Dynamic Range (HDR) Techniques can also extend the effective dynamic range of your sensor, but they don't handle movement within the scene very well and will usually require a tripod. In addition, HDR techniques require special software and post processing to assemble the image. Note-Some of the latest cameras do have built in HDR capabilities, but they limit you to the pre-defined processing algorithms, require extended in-camera processing and don't provide as much artistic flexibility. And the resulting image is always a JPG. Digital editing software like Lightroom and Photoshop can be used to simulate the gradient filter effect on your images, but can't replace the detail lost at capture because of camera sensor limitations. Raw images work best for the HDR approach (See Digital Photography School — http://digital-photography-school.com/comparing-gradient-neutral-density-filters-to-lightroom-gradient-tool/).

Gradient Neutral Density (GND) filters, like solid Neutral Density (ND) filters come in a range of densities (1 stop –ND2, 2 stop-ND4, 3 stop-ND8, etc.) and they'll work on any camera. As the word "gradient" implies the density of the coating varies - thick on one half of the filter and thin (or none) on the other half. They come in two basic designs –'soft' and 'hard'. Soft means the transition near the middle from dark to clear is gradual, hard means it is abrupt. A hard GND may not show an obvious transition line on your image, because other things like lens focal length, focus distance, and aperture have major effects on the way a specific filter affects the image. (See Photocrati -http://www.photocrati.com/using-neutral-density-gradient-filters/) GND's have been around since almost the beginning of photography.

In general, the easiest way to tell if you need to use a GND is to check your histogram. The histogram's shape is determined by the brightness of the scene and should show you, if you are too far right (or left), or maybe off both edges. Information will be lost if the histogram goes beyond either side, which means beyond your sensor's range.

The common gradient ND filter is usually rectangular and used with a Lee or Cokin filter holder. You can twist/slant the filter holder to align the grad ND with the bright area of your image and then slide the filter up/down in the holder as needed. ND2's and ND4's are the most common GND filters used. Gradient NDs do come in circular form, but they restrict the photographer's composition options and usually force placement of the horizon in the middle of the image.

Peter's Photography Tips & Tricks

BY PETER FLORCZAK
peterflorczak@gmail.com

This month's tips are some of my favorites, and ones that I personally use on a regular basis. If the links below don't work, just copy and paste them in your favorite browser and then hit ENTER.

Don't forget to visit our website.
http://www.gsacc.org/

You can also visit our Facebook page at:
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greater-San-Antonio-Camera-Club

1. Low Light Exposure Techniques: Light Readings, Image Review, "B" Exposures And Noise Suppression
By Jim Zuckerman • Posted: Oct 27, 2014
Shutterbug.com

The problem with making the right exposures in low light environments is that exposure meters, in-camera and handheld, are not particularly suited for the task. Light meters were designed to read subjects in normal daylight situations or in bright interiors. The meter will deliver a good exposure under these "normal" conditions, but low light photography is anything but normal. There is either a lack of light, many dark areas, very high contrast or all of these combined.

http://www.shutterbug.com/content/low-light-exposure-techniques-light-readings-image-review-"b"-exposures-and-noise

2. This following tip has changed the way that I personally take photographs. I have always struggled with the "half press of the shutter button" to set focus. I like to have more control. This technique has worked for me. Try it. You might never go back to your old way of setting focus.

How to use back button focus on your dSLR
Learn how to set focus on your dSLR more effectively -- without using the shutter button.
By Lexy Savvides
Cnet.com

Did you know you don't have to half-press the shutter button to focus? Here is an introduction to the brave new world of back button focus.

Normally, photographers learn to half-press the shutter button on their dSLR to find focus, and then fully press the button to take the photo.

http://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-use-back-button-focus-on-your-dslr

3. I think that Bill sent us this link earlier, but it is a topic that deserves a second look. We have all struggled with a new definition of what constitutes acceptable digital correction in Photojournalism. I think that this article explores the question really well.

Processing the News: Retouching in Photojournalism
By Scott Alexander
americanphotomag.com

Every digital image must be touched by software before you see it. But when each pixel is affected, who decides what is true?

Photojournalism in the digital age is fraught with peril. And it brings questions of objectivity, truth, ethics, and deception into sharp relief. While news photography remains vital to our understanding of the world, confusion in both the public consciousness and among photographers about the use of Adobe Photoshop and other editing tools threatens to erode its credibility and destroy its power to illuminate.

http://www.americanphotomag.com/photo-gallery/2014/11/processing-news-retouching-photojournalism?

4. Harness High Contrast
Michael Frye takes us through the steps of getting the most out of a high-contrast landscape
Text & Photography By Michael Frye
Outdoorphotographer.com

High-contrast scenes always have been difficult to process, but Adobe made this task considerably easier with the Process Version tools in Lightroom 4 and 5. Thanks to revamped underlying algorithms, we now have powerful new Highlights and Shadows tools for handling high-contrast scenes without resorting to HDR or blending exposures in Photoshop. In this excerpt from my ebook Landscapes in Lightroom 5, I take you step-by-step through processing a high-contrast image in Lightroom, showing how these new tools can make this once difficult job relatively easy.

http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/how-to/shooting/harness-high-contrast

COMPETITION RESULTS

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS: Due to the low number of entries received for December, a majority of the images that were received placed. The low turnout was likely due to the early competition date and the holidays.

PICTORIAL COLOR DIGITAL:
1st place: Southern Alps, by Mary Hunsicker
2nd place: River Walk Lights, by Lance Meyer
3rd place: Bus Rear Lights, by Tim Kirkland
HM: Waiting for the Dead, by Peter Florczak

PICTORIAL MONOCHROME DIGITAL:
1st place: Still Standing, by Brian Duchin
2nd place: Store Window, by Peter Florczak
3rd place: Baby Egret, by Mary Hunsicker

NATURE DIGITAL:
1st place: Bugle Call, by Brian Duchin
2nd place: Colorful Parrot, by Peter Florczak
3rd place: Spider, Spider, by Mary Hunsicker
HM: Black Belly Whistling Ducks, by Lance Meyer

PHOTOJOURNALISM DIGITAL:
1st place: Alamo Plaza Christmas, by Lance Meyer
2nd place: Excitement at the Zoo, by Mary Hunsicker
3rd place: Buddhist Prayer Ceremony, by Peter Florczak
HM: Jump Shot, by Brian Duchin

ASSIGNMENT DIGITAL:
1st place: Kerrville Stonehenge, by Peter Florczak
2nd place: Ayers Rock, by Diris Thomsen
3rd place: Seminole Canyon Wall, by Mary Hunsicker
HM: Picture Rocks, by Brian Duchin

CREATIVE DIGITAL:
1st place: Native American Icon at Seminole, by Mary Hunsicker
2nd place: Lemon-Mint, by Peter Florczak
3rd place: Rust in Peace, by Brian Duchin

Thank you to Ken Emrie, Holly Emrie and William Hunsicker for judging the December prints.

Upcoming assignments

February (projected): Valentine's Day: Do a photo to send your loved one for a Valentine.
March (prints): Monster!!!!!: Be creative when finding a "monster" to shoot.

EVENTS

Thursday, January 1: Happy New Year! No meeting.

Thursday, January 15: GSACC print competition, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 5: GSACC educational meeting, 7:30 p.m. Topic TBA.

Thursday, February 19: GSACC digital competition, 7:30 p.m.

February 12-March 1, 2015: San Antonio Stock Show & rodeo. Details are online at www.sarodeo.com. Location: Area around the AT&T Center and Freeman Coliseum.

Thursday, March 5: GSACC educational meeting, 7:30 p.m. Topic TBA.

Sunday. March 8: Daylight Savings starts.

Thursday, March 19: GSACC print competition, 7:30 p.m.

March ?: GSACC/HCC shootout. Watch for details!

Thursday, April 2: GSACC educational meeting, 7:30 p.m. Topic TBA.

Sunday, April 5: Happy Easter!

Thursday, April 16: GSACC digital competition, 7:30 p.m.

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All regular meetings take place at the Lions Field Adult Center, 2809 Broadway unless otherwise noted.

THE NEXT COMPETITION

January's competition is prints

PRINT CATEGORIES:
1. Pictorial Prints Color
2. Pictorial Prints Monochrome
3. Nature Prints
4. Photojournalism Prints
5. Assignment Prints
6. Creative Prints

January Assignment: Autumn Scene: Show a subject typical of the Fall season (football, foliage, Halloween, Thanksgiving, etc.).

FILTERS from Page 5:

I will again remind you that the purpose of using a filter is to improve the image capture. Lee or Cokin filter holders can cause vignetting. On wide-angle lens, the holder can actually be visible at the edges of the image, so I suggest you check Live View to insure that the filter holder is not obscuring a desired part of the image. At a small f-stop, zoom in and examine the Live View image edges for darkening even if the holder is not obvious in full Live View.

In summary, in the digital world, there are several ways for the photographer to control dynamic range capture problems. GND filters, though not the only way to control the dynamic range of a scene, are one of the oldest, work with all DSLR's, and provide a fast, repeatable method. Since they can be used in place of, or in addition to, any of the other techniques or processes mentioned above, I believe they should be a tool in every photographer's kit.

Editor/webmaster's note: Peter Florczak's column on Page 6 was received too late to include in the December issue of the Flash. Peter's December column and William Hunsicker's January column are also available on www.gsacc.org.

FLASH SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS: Articles: Text may be handwritten or typed; e-mailed articles should be plain text, or Microsoft Word or Works attachments. Images: You may loan prints, slides or 35mm negatives to the editor; the preferred size for images sent via e-mail is 1024x768 and the preferred format is JPEG.
E-mail address for submissions: adamkincher@sbcglobal.net
Publication deadline: Submissions are due on the 20th day of the month before the desired publication month.

FLASH JANUARY 2015

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PSA
Photographic Society of America

Member since 1951