placer color

Newsletter of the Placer Camera Club

http://www.placercameraclub.org

Placer Camera Club meets the third Tuesday of each month, except August, at 7:00PM in the Beecher Room of the Auburn Placer County Library, 350 Nevada Street, Auburn, Ca.   **Visitors Welcome!**

This month's meeting will be Tuesday **Jan 19th .** Informal gathering at **6:30** with the meeting starting **promptly** at **7 PM.**

This month……..

We have **image evaluations**. The judge will be **Jeff Burkholder**. Jeff is a working commercial photographer.

Starting this month the image evaluations will combine **prints** and **projected** images. Each member will be able to enter 4 images in any category. This will give members who don't enter the print evaluations a chance to participate in more evaluations. You can enter 4 images in prints, projected or a combination of both, but only a total of 4 per evaluation. This will give us more time for feedback from the judge and will help us improve our photographic skills.

At the December meeting Judy Hooper presented appreciation awards to 3 members for all the work they do for the club. The 3 are Kristi Middleton, Bonnie Godfrey and Mike Schumacher. Kristi and Bonnie received a gift card for dinner for 2 and Mike received a gift basket.
Sue Barthelow and Steve Aldridge won a drawing for a print portfolio made by Judy Hooper.

Arthur Bell gives us a heads up on this website.
It has lots of good info including a nice hdr tutorial.
Also, check out the section on adding texture to photos.
Some very amazing photography.
http://www.stuckincustoms.com/

Event Calendar

January 19
Monthly meeting
Image evaluations
Projected & prints

February 16
Monthly meeting
Image evaluations
Projected & prints

March 16
Monthly meeting
Theme is weather
Photography question & answer forum

April 20
Monthly meeting
Image evaluations
Projected & prints

May 18
Monthly meeting
Image evaluations
Projected & prints

See last page for club officers & commitees

Green Eyes Watching

By Jim L White

We were staked out west of Dutch Flat, watching the Union Pacific Railroad tracks for the late afternoon down- mountain freight; hoping for a photograph of a snow encrusted engine with its yellow headlight pushing thru the late evening snowfall. I had four-wheeled thru the frozen crust making a sound like breaking glass to park along the tracks on a seldom used dirt road. There were no dwellings for miles on this road, but somehow two large Newfoundland type dogs ran out of the snow-covered woods across the tracks and barked at us like we were unwelcome intruders into their icy domain. Our cameras are ready and the windows are down so we can hear the approaching train.

I poured two cups of steaming coffee and we munched on our Kashie bars and tried to stare down the barking inferno across the tracks. Earlier I had shot at high speed straight into the setting sun and U.P. # 6933 eastbound near the Dutch Flat diggings. One shot was not bad but no star effect was had on the sun behind the engine because my F stop was too wide. I just did not have time to change the settings with the unexpected train charging at us. Now I would be ready with the camera all set when the engine came around the curve up-stream and the setting sun behind our backs. The barking finally stopped and the dogs across the tracks went back into the woods.

Time to put the thermos and energy bars away in the back of the truck; no need to spill hot coffee when the train rushed around the corner and I started shooting like a demon trying for that great train picture. I stepped out of the truck and walked to the rear to open the camper door when 30 yards away something big and black glided out of the woods on the left side of our access road and stopped in the snow on the road with a solid stare that made me hold my breath and check the holster on my belt. I strained to see, but this beast had a 2 inch tail that stuck straight out and ears that stood straight up, with maybe tassels on the ears. The body was really dark and thicker than it should be. The light was poor and I really needed my binoculars left on the front seat. He paused and then glided into the very thick snow covered manzinita, and then stopped. I could feel the stare coming from just below his ears .A faint beam of sunlight refracted off the snow struck his face and one eye went bright green. I could see the outline of his thick black body thru the brush. As silent as he came, he glided away into the thick snow covered jungle.

The train picture did not seem that important now. We waited 15 minutes more and gave up. We drove over the tracks of the unknown, unable to tell what it was from its tracks in the too hard snow.
It is the next day now and as you can tell, the thoughts of those green eyes are still with me. With more than a half century of wildlife observations in California behind me, I am not sure now what I know about wildlife in California. I do love photography.

The Importance of Backups

by Mike Schumacher

I am pretty good at backing up my photos but recently I had a scare that made me realize I was lax in other backup areas. One evening as I was turning of the computer for the night it would not wake up from its hibernated state. I killed the power (it was totally unresponsive) and tried to reboot. Nothing, it just sat at a blank screen. Ok I thought, it's late and I'll deal with it in the morning. I thought my 'c' drive (the drive with windows) had quit working or the mother board had a problem. I realized that I had not backed up several folders on the 'c' drive. I would lose the December issue of the newsletter and all associated files and the latest newsletter I was working on. In addition, several digital slide shows I've been working on, my email contact list (rebuilding it by hand is no fun), the latest changes to my lightroom catalog, several pdf files that I don't want to lose, anyway you get the idea.
The next morning the problem resolved itself, windows started up after some scanning.

The big issue here is not to ignore your other backups. The first thing I did was to backup my documents, pictures and music folders and my contact list. I will now do so every Sunday morning, that's a day that works for me.

To backup after the first time, I use a program called Foldermatch (http://www.foldermatch.com/) I've been using this inexpensive program for several years and it works like a champ. It will compare the contents of 2 folders and from there you can tell it to make one folder look like the other or many other options. It saves a lot of time trying to remember what is new or changed.

I store my backups on an external drive. Oh, and you do want more than one backup for your photos. I use a small portable hard drive, the ones small enough to fit in your pocket and that goes to an off-site location, in my case a safe deposit box. I have 2 portable drives, one is here with all my photos and backups and the other off-site. The one here is my grab and go drive in case we have to get out quick.

Don't put it off, set a backup schedule for yourself and stick to it!

How to Make a Slide Show

by Sue Barthelow

I recently learned how to use my computer to make a slide show of my digital photos with accompanying music. The fun of doing it was well worth the time it took to put it together. This method of making a slide show doesn't require you to purchase any special software, but it only works on Microsoft Windows computers - you end up with a wmv file that is not usable on a Mac computer without special viewing software.

What You Need

You can use a free program - Photo Story 3 for Windows - to create your slide show and can then use Windows Media Player to run it.

If you don't already have Photo Story 3 for Windows, the best way to find it is using Google. Enter "photo story 3" in the search box and then select the Microsoft web page from the list of search results. Download the version that matches the Windows software you use on your computer.

Preparing Your Files

Start by selecting and preparing the images you want to include in the show. It's easier if all of your selected images are in the same folder and have the same or similar height/width sizing. Pay attention to your file sizes so you don't end up with a slide show too large to handle. For example, I used 19 JPEG photos that were 1024 pixels on the long side and ranged from 300 KB to 600 KB in file size. I included background music that had a file size of 3,543 KB. My final project size was 13,197 KB, and my slide show was 4,833 KB. You can use less disk space by including photos that are smaller or have less resolution.

If you want to use background music with your slide show, you need to be aware of copyright issues. If you own a copy of the music you want to use, you can play it with your slide show without much worry. However, if you want to put your slide show on the web or if you want to send it to your friends and family, you put yourself at risk for copyright infringement. To be safe, find royalty free music on the internet using Google.

When you select music, think about the style of music that goes well with your pictures. In addition, the music's length of play is important. You want something that is the same length as your slide show. You can adjust how long the pictures take to display in order to make times the same. I'll tell you how to that below.

If you already have a copy of the music on your computer, you're ready to go. If you need to copy it from one of your CDs or from the internet, do that before you start making the slide show. You can add music later, but it's easier if you have it ready first.

I found one of my CDs that had music I wanted to use and put the CD in my computer. Windows Media Player automatically came up to play the CD. I stopped the music play and selected Rip to see what was on the CD and to see the individual play times, which may also be shown on the CD cover. I selected the box in front of the piece I wanted to use and clicked "Start Rip" to save the music to my computer.

Creating the Slide Show

Launch Photo Story 3 for Windows and select "Begin a new story". Click "Next" to begin.

Selecting Your Pictures

Click "Import Pictures" and then use the *File Browser* window to select the images you want to include. Once the pictures have been imported, you can arrange them in any order you wish. Click "Remove black borders" to improve the look of the images and then click "Next".

Using the *Add a title to your pictures* page, you can add titles and use a special effect if you want. You don't have to do anything on this page if you don't want to. However, you must select one picture at a time to do something. When ready, click "Next".

The *Narrate your pictures and customize motion* page is where you set the amount of time each picture gets displayed during the slide show and the transition between pictures. To do this for each picture, select a picture and click "Customize Motion".

The *Customize Motion* page has two tabs. The *Motion and Duration* tab lets you add special zoom effects if you wish and lets you set the number of seconds that you want the picture to be displayed. The *Transition* tab lets you set how you want the slide show to move from the previous picture to the one selected and how long you want the transition to last.

One item you should note – the *Motion and Duration* tab for the last picture in the slide show tells you how long the show will last beneath the "End position" image. If the show length is too short or too long, simply adjust some of the durations you have set for the individual pictures. The show length is important if you want to add background music. For the best show, the music and slide show lengths should be the same so they end at the same time.

Click "Save Project" to save what you have done so far. Use the "Preview" button to see if you like your slide show before you continue. If you don't like something, you can change it now. When you like what you see, click "Save Project" if you made any changes and then click "Next".

If you don't want music, you're finished with the prep work and can skip adding the music. Click "Next" to move to the *Save your story* page.

Selecting Accompanying Music

You may want to click "Learn more about adding background music*"* and read and follow the help information. However, here's what I do.

On the *Add background music* page, click "Select Music" to tell the Photo Story program what music to use for your slide show. You'll get a window that lets you find and select music from your computer.

Once you've added your music, click "Next" to move to the *Save your story* page.

Saving Your Slide Show

Save your project by clicking "Save Project" and then save your story. I save my slide shows in the *My Videos* folder, but you can save them anywhere you wish.

Click "Next" and wait while the program builds the slide show. You can now view your slide show. If there is something you don't like about it, you can change it at any time by using the saved project file.

Watching Your Slide Show

When you want to watch the slide show, double click on the saved show file on you computer's disk (not the project file, which is the large one). The slide show file will be a wmv file. Enjoy it yourself or entertain your family and friends. To send it with an e-mail message, simply attach the wmv file to your message. Beware of making it too large for a successful download if you want to send it with a message.

Notes from the Field

by Ardath Winterowd

The big snow storm 2009 knocked down many trees and also broke some huge branches on my 2 acre Auburn property. This is a photo of the arborist taking down a snag that was hanging about 15 feet up over my metal shed, with branches tangled in my power lines and the electrical conduit at the front corner of my house roof. Even though I had broken branches hanging all over my power lines to my house, I was never without electricity or telephone service, and my metal shed escaped unscathed. It sure was a costly clean-up though – Yikes! $850!

Free – Digital Field Guide for the Canon 40d. This is a nicely put together book and might apply somewhat to the 50d also. Mike 530-367-4505 radioman@ftcnet.net

Review
Zeiss 21mm f/2.8 Distagon Lens for Canon EOS

By Tony Hallas

Something always bothered me ... all the Canon extreme wide angle lenses were terrible wide open. This is OK if you are shooting in broad daylight and you can stop down to f/8 ... but what about low light mood shots ... or worse ... astrophotography? You need that aperture ...

So a few months ago I Googled "wide angle lens for Canon" and along with the usual suspects up comes this article about the Zeiss lens ... and wonders of wonders ... it's sharp wide open at f/2.8 !!!


Corner Resolution Comparison ... Canon / Zeiss

Corner, Canon 16-35mm L II at 21mm at f/2.8 on Canon 5D Mark II

Corner, Zeiss 21mm f/2.8 ZE at f/2.8 on Canon 5D Mark II

Arguably the most complex wide angle lens made ... the 21mm f/2.8 is in a class by itself. Originally this lens cost about $5000 when made in Germany but it is now made in Japan and the cost is a more "modest" $1,750. I got one for Christmas for $1,500 so the price has gone up since then ... word must be getting out.

The lens has 16 elements and a nine leaf diaphram that always makes a perfect circle for very pleasing out of focus effects. It can focus almost to the front element of the lens for amazing wide angle macro effects. The lens is all metal ... no plastic ... and is manual focus with an infinity stop. You can focus the lens using indicators in the Canon 5D to show when you are in focus ... I appreciate the infinity stop for doing images in the dark of distant things.

The only flaw I have found is some vignetting at f/2.8 ... shooting in daylight at f/4 alleviates this to a great extent ... and the vignetting is easily corrected when converting from camera RAW to 16 bit tiff format.
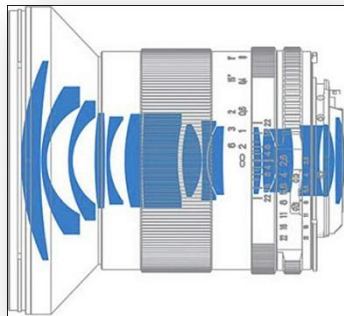
The comparison of the edge of the frame for Canon vs. Zeiss pretty much sums up this lens. Besides the amazing sharpness, it has almost no color fringing and ghosting ... shoot something very bright against a dark background ... no false color along the edge.

Here's the problem ... Zeiss makes a whole series of lenses for the Canon ... looks like I'll be broke for some time to come.
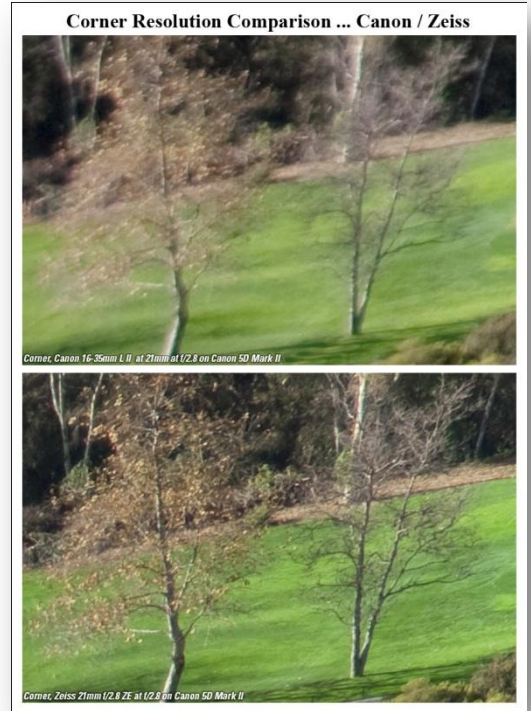
Local Education Offerings Related to Photography Spring 2010

By Jim Bennett

Sierra College

(from "Kaleidoscope" or see www.sccommed.org for more details of each offering)

(Register for class through web, fax, phone (800-242-4004 x7160), walk-in or mail)

Movie Maker Desktop Video - turn images into video
March 20 Sat   10 am-4:30
333 Sunrise Ave, Rm RG-112
$81

Digital Photography - Level 1
Feb2,9,16,23 Tues 6:30-8:30pm
or
Feb3,10,17,24 Wed 9-11am
or
Feb11,18,25 Thurs 1-3:45pm
333 Sunrise Ave, Rm RG-112
$98

Digital Photography - Level 2
Mar 2,9,16,23 Tues 6:30-8:30pm
333 Sunrise Ave, Rm RG-112
$98

Photoshop Elements 7.0 Level 1
Mar 4,11,18,25 Thurs 1-4pm
333 Sunrise Ave, Rm RG-112
$127

Photoshop Elements 7.0 Level 2
Apr8,15,22,29 Thurs 1-4pm
333 Sunrise Ave, Rm RG-112
$127

Photography Basics
Apr 6,13,20,27, May4 Tues 6:30-8:30
333 Sunrise Ave, Rm RG-112
$10

Placer School for Adults

(from January 2010 Issue or see www.placeronline.org for more details)

(Registration starts Jan 19 - through web, or mail/walk-in - early-bird $5-$10 discount if before Jan 29)

Digital Point and Shoot Photography
2/22,23,27   8:30-11:30am
13055 Bill Francis Dr.
$54

Digital SLR Photography
2/24,26 8:30-11:30am and 2/27 12:30-3:30pm
13055 Bill Francis Dr.
$60+$20 book

Digital Photography
3/3,10,17,24   1-4pm
13055 Bill Francis Dr.
$60+ $28 book

Create Movies - Windows 7 Moviemaker
4/8,15,22,29   8:30-11:30am
13055 Bill Francis Dr.
$60

Photoshop Elements 7 level 1
3/16,23 and 4/6,13   1-4pm
13055 Bill Francis Dr.
$60

Photoshop Elements 7 level 2
4/20,27 and 5/4,11   1-4pm
13055 Bill Francis Dr.
$60

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR IN PHOTOS

You're probably wondering why we pick one image over another; there actually are some simple rules of photography we look for in each photo. Common mistakes are:

(1) A photo out of focus, either the whole photo or part of it in an important location such as the bottom front of the print

(2) Too much "clutter" in the picture. We want our attention to go directly to the subject, not see a lot of competing, but not necessary, clutter around it.

(3) Exposure - is the picture too light or too dark to easily see the subject.

(4) Poor lighting, a "flat" image where rocks, subject, sky, etc. all blend together without different shadows, colors, etc. or the opposite where the sun might bleach out the lighter parts of the image, giving no texture to those areas.

There are other more subtle criteria we look for; placement of the subject, size of the subject within the image, etc. but the 4 listed above are the first and foremost most commonly seen, easily correctible problems that usually cause a photo to be eliminated.

For more specific guidelines, please feel free to drop in on any of our Placer Camera Club meetings and ask questions! We have meetings the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 at the Beecher Room in the Library off Nevada Street. We have short programs, critique our own images, have "how-to" presentations and to end it all, great desserts!!!

Placer Camera Club Webpage

Check out the Placer Camera Club webpage.
http://placercameraclub.org

Mike Schumacher (Newsletter)   530-367-4505
radioman@ftcnet.net

Don't forget our tutorials webpage. It's at:

http://www.placercameraclub.org/tutorials/index.html
* * * *

Huey Monitor Calibration

The club has a Huey monitor calibration system for use by club members.

Contact Judy Hooper to 'check out' Huey.

530-888-8308.