

In Focus

*The monthly Newsletter of the Focus Camera Club
September 2011*

Photos in this issue are from last month's 'Open' competition.

Chock full of photo goodness

I know this newsletter is longer than most, but there's just so much going on this month and next. And I'm sure there's stuff that was missed too. If you know of other events, share with the rest of the Focus members.

This Month's Featured Article

Since Russ is giving a presentation on Nature's Gifts this month we'll kick off this newsletter with one of his instructional articles. Background are important in all images, but especially in macro work. [Read more here...](#)



Paintbrush Bud by Nancy Nelson

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Focus Camera Club Officers and Committee members

Officers

President: Joe Bonita
Vice President: Frank Gibbs
Treasurer: Peggy Dietz
Secretary: Paul DiSalvo

Committees

Executive: Joe Bonita, Russ Burden, Peggy Dietz, Paul DiSalvo, Frank Gibbs, Cliff Lawson, Marv Mickelson, Tim Visser
Competitions: Russ Burden, Marv Mickelson, Joe Bonita, Frank Gibbs, Nancy Myer
Programs: Tim Visser
Membership: Peggy Dietz
Special Projects: Marv Mickelson
Education: (Currently unmanned)

The purpose of the Focus Camera Club is to further its members' enjoyment, knowledge and mastery of photographic skills through cooperative efforts and fellowship.

Focus Camera Club Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held the First and Third Tuesday of each month. We gather in the meeting room at the back of the Animal Hospital building located at 5640 County Line Place in Highlands Ranch. Get a Google Map by [clicking here](#). Meetings start promptly at 7 PM. Parking is at the back of the building, but please leave the first 6 spots open. We can also park in the "Tiles for Less" parking lot just to the east of the hospital and walk across.

Macro Photography: Importance of a Good Background

By Russ Burden

For those who have been with me in the field or are regular readers of my Tips on Take Great Pictures, you've either heard me say or read the following: "The background is equally as important as the subject." This is especially true in macro photography, given the diversity of subjects, along with the creative aspects that are often incorporated.

For instance, a technique known as selective focus is often used to highlight a single portion of a selected petal of a flower. If the background has bright highlights that draw the eye, the selective focus effect will fall short. If the background is busy and doesn't allow the eye to be comfortably drawn to the selected petal, again the effect will fall short.

There is a phenomenon I refer to as "tunnel vision composing." Many photographers look past the subject and ignore the background and all the corners in the frame. The syndrome is very common, so don't feel bad if it ails you. A photographer zeros in on the primary subject and subconsciously ignores whatever else the camera sees.

The good news is it's an affliction that's easy to overcome. The cure comes in the form of slowing down and studying the entire viewfinder before pressing the shutter. As the photographic disorder is slowly dispelled from your system, you'll eventually be able to make a cursory glance around the viewfinder and notice any distractions.

Patience: In macro photography, it's good when the subject pops from the background. One way to achieve this effect is to photograph the subject against a wash of color. The more simple the background, the more the subject will pop. Wait for the subject to move to a different location or simply find a different subject. As much as you want to be able to make the photo work, if the background is busy, you can't fight it.





A clean, uncluttered background

Move in Closer: One way to help throw a background more out of focus is to keep moving closer. The closer you get to the subject, the more you narrow the angle of view which helps eliminate parts of a background.

Additionally, the closer you get to a subject, the more it's magnified which inherently narrows the depth of field. As depth of field decreases, background and foreground objects fall more out of focus.

The caveat is the lack of depth of field also impacts the subject so it's essential you make note of how it affects the field of sharpness on the primary components. It's important to note that if the subject is too close to the background, it's impossible to throw it out of focus.



Make Your Own Backgrounds: If you have complete control over your macro subject, a great trick of the trade is to introduce an artificial background. I've used colored pieces of cloth, sheets of cardboard, and even the back of my green jacket.

If it has texture, be sure to place it far enough away to fall out of the depth of field range. Solid colors work well as do ones that are dappled in paint.

For instance, I painted a green board with blotches of dark and light green. When placed far enough away from the subject, the blotches fall out of focus so it looks like a very natural background.

Experiment with different distances and apertures to see where it needs to be placed so the effect looks natural.

(All images in this article are © Russ Burden)



Program and Competition Schedules

Program Schedule		Competition Schedule	
09/06/11	Presentation – Nature's Gifts by Russ Burden	09/20/11	Subject – Altered Reality
10/04/11	Presentation – Digital 201 Mini Presentations	10/18/11	Subject – Looking Up
11/01/11	Presentation – Calibration by Nat Coalson and Dennis Halley	11/15/11	Subject – Open

September 6 Program with Russ Burden

Russ Burden will present “Nature’s Gifts.” The show is a mixture of scenic and wildlife photos from his travels. Wildlife and landscape images are interspersed and vary in subject matter from macro shots of butterflies to grand scenics along the Oregon coast. Included are panoramas, large mammals, birds, landscapes from the South West along with many other of Russ’ favorites.

The show is a twenty minute escape into the visual world of nature.

This Month's Upcoming Competition is Altered Reality

As per the Focus definition, “The photo should be a clear and obvious alteration of the original scene.”

Let’s see, what would Jerry Uelsmann do?? Ummm, his normal and everyday images, that’s what.

Want some inspiration from a guy who (still) does all of his creative work in a darkroom? Visit

<http://www.uelsmann.net/> and look through the galleries. Some absolutely phenomenal imagery. (There are some nudes in the galleries, so make sure the kids are in another room.)

There's a great interview from 2007 on [Shutterbug's website](#). Hope this inspires you.

If you need the Competition Entry forms or the template for the stick-on labels, you can get both [from the Focus website on the Competition Rules page](#).



August Open Competition Results

	Media	Artist	Image Title	Score	Award
f5.6	Color Print	Gwen Piña	Friends in Far Away Places	9	1st
	Digital Projection	Gwen Piña	Better Days	9	1st
		Lena Owens	Earth Cries in Flowers	8	2nd
f8	Monochrome Print	Steve Kolsky	The Face of War	10	1st
	Color Print	John Gravilius	Henderson	9	1st
		Rick Matson	Lunch Time	9	2nd
		Rick Matson	Sacred Ground	9	3rd
	Digital Projection	Todd Lytle	Hummingbird Trio	10	1st
		John Gravilius	Grant Ranch	10	2nd
		Tim Visser	Peaceful Evening	10	3rd
		Tim Visser	Tranquility	10	HM
	Monochrome Print	Paul Olthoff	Ann	8	1st
		Jennifer Riefenberg	Doorway to the Past	8	2nd
	f11	Color Print	Guy Geoly	Follow Me	10
		Paul DiSalvo	Hanging with Kimberly	10	2nd
		Peggy Dietz	Old Sanctuary	10	3rd
Digital Projection		Nancy Nelson	Paintbrush Bud	10	1st
		Jim Doolittle	Marissa	9	2nd
		Nancy Myer	Dewey Dahlia	9	3rd
		Dan Greenberg	It Pays to Take Care of Your Teeth	9	HM
f16	Monochrome Print	Guy Geoly	Lights On	9	1st
	Color Print	Cliff Lawson	Batter's View	10	1st
	Digital Projection	Joe Bonita	Orthodox Interior	9	1st
	Monochrome Print	Joe Bonita	Repetition	9	1st

News from the Prez

Focus Mentoring Program

The Executive Committee is implementing a mentoring program for the club members as a result of the survey done by Tim Visser, our Programs chairman. Various club members have asked for mentoring on topics including (in no particular order) the use of Photoshop plugins, lighting techniques, composition, image scanning, creativity, Lightroom, camera functions, etc.

Jim Doolittle, Jennifer Riefenberg, Russ Burden, Paul DiSalvo, Peggy Dietz, Marilyn Clark, Tim Visser, Cliff Lawson and I have agreed to become mentors for these and other subjects.

The meetings for this program will take place on the fifth Tuesday of each month in which there are five Tuesdays. It began on August 30. Here's a how that program went.

Aug. 30: We had approximately 30 members in attendance who supplied approximately 40 digital images for critique. Russ Burden did the major critiquing job with commentary from many of the members present and I thought the critiquing was some of the best I've seen since I've been at Focus. After about 1 hour and 50 minutes of critique, Russ demonstrated on three of the images how they could be improved using Nik software, and major improvements were made. I think the session was a great success.

We're planning on doing mentoring sessions of one kind or another on each 5th Tuesday of those months that have five Tuesdays. The next one occurs on November 29 at 7:00 PM at the usual club meeting place. The topic and format have yet to be determined.

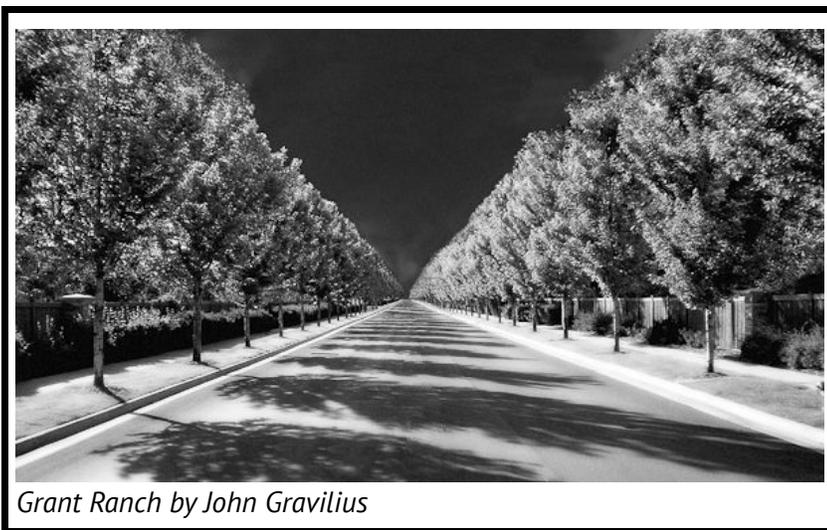
Competitions Committee and Executive Committee met and decided:

- (a) we would no longer do pass-throughs on competition nights, beginning in August.
- (b) we are going to experiment with having members of the f16 group do the judging for some or all future competitions. October competition will be the first.

We've purchased the Color Munki monitor calibrator for use by the club's members. Member use is free but member must leave a \$50 deposit. If lost or broken, the member using it will be liable for replacement cost (or repair cost if it can be fixed).

Paul DiSalvo will be the keeper of the Munki, aka, the Munki Man!

– Joe



Grant Ranch by John Gravilius

Crowdfunding guide at Photoshelter.com

Crowdfunding platforms provide a new, powerful opportunity for photographers to gain financial support for their projects by reaching a large online audience anywhere in the world.

Facilitated by social media, photographers are now able to directly promote their personal projects and solicit funding to reach their goals in a manner that is highly efficient, far reaching, and conducive to raising large and small sums of

money. More information and a free PDF ebook are available on [Photoshelter's website](http://Photoshelter.com).

Calls For Entries / Photo Contests

C4FAP – Portfolio Showcase

PORTFOLIO SHOWCASE VOLUME 5

Entries due: September 14, 2011

Online exhibition starts: November 30, 2011

Theme: There is no theme for this exhibition. The images will be evaluated as a cohesive body of work, rather than individual images. Fifteen photographers will be chosen to display their twelve-image portfolios in the Center's Portfolio ShowCase Volume 5 book and online exhibition. One artist will be selected for a solo exhibition at the Center.

JUROR: Chris Pichler

is the founder and publisher of Nazraeli Press. Based in Portland, Oregon, Nazraeli Press publishes books specializing in contemporary photography.

Visit [the Portfolio info page](#).

C4FAP - Portraits

A visual representation that portrays the likeness of a person, animal, place or thing.

Entries due: October 11, 2011

Notice of acceptance: October 21, 2011

Exhibition dates: Jan 13 - Feb 25, 2012

JUROR: Anna Walker Skillman

Anna Walker Skillman began her career working at the Haines Gallery, a leading contemporary art gallery in San Francisco. In 1993, Anna moved to Atlanta to manage the studio of famed Atlanta artist Todd Murphy. After working with Mr. Murphy to establish his career for five years, Anna turned to photography and joined Jackson Fine Art in 1998. In March of 2003, she purchased Jackson Fine Art from Jane Jackson who became curator of the prestigious and renowned collection of Sir Elton John.

Visit [the Portraits contest page online](#).



Telluride Photo Festival

From Chris Esch, Director of Group Sales for Telluride Alpine Lodging.

The San Juan Mountain Range provides some of the state's most spectacular views. Telluride hosts a Photography Festival **September 26 - October 6**. Portfolio reviews, workshops, seminars and more. For more information on the festival please go to the following website - www.telluridephotofestival.com

Telluride Alpine Lodging is Telluride's largest property management company. With an inventory consisting of over 350 properties we can cater to anyone's lodging needs - from hotels to homes. Here is a link that will answer any questions you may have about our company or Telluride - www.telluride.com

Thanks, Chris 800-376-9769 x254

(I know this was a bit "salesy", but the photo festival sounds like a cool event. – Karl)

MPEX Photography and Text

For the next Midwest Photo Exchange Competition in September, the theme is "Photography and Text" Adobe® software is the exclusive sponsor. Details at the [MPEX contest page](#).

Here are some things that exemplify the theme: photos of text on objects, signs in the built environment, photos with titles and/or captions, ad copy, web macros, and text/image collages.

The second and third place prizes go to the public vote. Jeremy Kester, of Kester Imagery, will judge for the first place prize. At the end of the competition, we will publish his thought process and reason for granting the prize.

Local Photo Opps and Events

Russ Burden Photo Tours

www.russburdenphotography.com

303.791.9997

2011 Photo Tours

Sept 24 - Oct 3, Yellowstone and Teton Natl. Parks
in Fall - 10 days

Oct. 18 - 23, Hunts Mesa - Aerial perspective of
Monument Valley and Capital Reef NP

Nov. 5 - 11, Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks

Dec. 6 - 12, Bosque Del Apache & White Sands
Natl. Monument

2012 Photo Tours

February 18 - 24, Birds of Florida

April 14 - 20, Monument Valley and Slot Canyons

May 5 - 11, Arches and Canyonlands
with Photoshop

May 26 - June 4, Oregon / Northern California /
Redwoods

June 16 - 22, Grand Teton / Yellowstone National
Parks - Spring

John Fielder Workshop

John Fielder to host photography workshop to benefit Domus Pacis Family Respite

Nationally renowned nature photographer John Fielder, will host a photography workshop on **September 20th** at his home in Silverthorne. This event will include personal instruction in nature landscape photography and technique, as well as dinner prepared by Doug Schwartz, Chef at the CMC Culinary School.

The cost is \$250/person, with all proceeds going to Domus Pacis Family Respite. The mission of Domus Pacis is to provide families impacted by cancer a week of respite and peace in Summit County's high country. For additional information or to reserve a space please call Vince at 970-547-4745. Space is limited, so call early.



Repetition by Joe Bonita

4th Annual Worldwide Photowalk

(Did you get this email notice?)

Have you heard the good news? Scott Kelby announced that his 4th Annual Worldwide Photo Walk would be held on **October 1 and 2** this year. We're super excited that it's being held over a weekend in October so now you can choose to walk on either Saturday or Sunday, and it will be much cooler weather!

Please join this amazing event again this year. You can Find a Walk scheduled in your area, or if you feel like leading a walk yourself, you can apply to be a lead-

er. Just follow the instructions under the Lead a Walk section of the website at worldwidephotowalk.com or on their [Facebook page](#).

Light it! Shoot It! Retouch It!

Friday, **September 16**, 2011 at the Colorado Conv. Ctr. 700 14th St Denver, CO 80202

Don't miss your chance to see the most requested, most anticipated live tour of 2011!

Lighting expert Scott Kelby brings one of his all-time most popular online classes to life in this amazing day where you learn it all; the lighting, the shooting, and the retouching, all live as it happens.

You'll see everything unfold from scratch in each session, as Scott starts with an empty stage, and then puts together the lighting for a live portrait shoot. You'll learn the same lighting setups, shooting techniques, and portrait retouching effects used by today's top pros.

There is not much time to register! See <http://kelbytraining.com/event/denver-co/> for info

Only \$89 (\$79 for NAPP members)

Chalk Art Festival

September 10 at Arapahoe Community College

The Arapahoe Community College Foundation's 2nd Annual Chalk It Up to Education Art Festival. A FREE event featuring hundreds of professional, amateur and students chalk artists creating masterpiece drawings on the sidewalks surrounding Arapahoe Community College. Crafter and Artisan booths will line the streets with beautiful works of art available for purchase. A live entertainment stage will feature local performers and musicians throughout the day!

There's also a "Car Show and Shine" running from 10 AM to 2 PM in Lot F.

To find out more about the festival, go to: <http://www.chalkituptoeducation.com>.



Hummingbird Trio by Todd Lytle

Corn Maze, Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield

Every Friday, Saturday & Sunday from
Sept. 9 – Oct. 30

Get lost at this year's 8-acre Corn Maze. The maze is for all ages and includes activities for the whole family.

Members have complimentary event admission for one visit—that includes the number of guests that your membership allows. Bring your member invitation postcard.

Check out the hours & more <http://www.botanicgardens.org/content/corn-maze>

Frame #37

A collection of extra tidbits I've discovered during the past few weeks.

- Check out this list of [37 Websites Every Photographer Should be Reading](#). I found some new ones to get some inspiration from.
- Topaz is releasing a B&W Effects plugin. There is a special introductory price of \$29.99 (Regularly \$59.99). Just enter coupon code: "bwandbeyond" when [purchasing](#). **Offer ends 09/18/11**. See the demo on [Youtube](#).
- Do you use Photomatix Pro from HDRSoft.com? They just put out the 4.1.2 update on Aug 29. You can go grab the Mac or Windows (32 or 64 bit) updates [on their download page](#).

“ Within every man and woman a secret is hidden, and as a photographer it is my task to reveal it if I can. ”

– [Yousuf Karsh](#)