InFocus Newsletter

May 2020

Photos in this issue are from last month's 'Workers / People at Work' competition.

We're homebound, but club activities keep marching on...

Thank goodness for technology and tools like Zoom! Since LoneTree Civic Center now says they are closed "indefinitely" we must rely on online meetings. Zoom has proven to be an effective method, don't you agree?

Until further notice, ALL Focus club meetings will be via Zoom. Hopefully, we can get back to in-person meetings later this year.

Macro Background Tips

Improve your backyard (or any) macro shots with these useful tips.

Read the full article...

Una Cerveza Por Favor by Todd Lytle

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President: Clint Dunham

Vice President: Oz Pfenninger

Treasurer: Ron Schaller

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Committee Chairs

Executive: Clint Dunham, Oz Pfenninger,Ron Schaller, Bill Williams and the Committee chairs listed below

Competitions: Larry Hartlaub

Programs: Shawn Slade / Dave Hull

Membership: Dick York

Special Projects: Dick York

Newsletter/Website: Karl Peschel

Our Mission

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 Second Friday & Fourth Wednesday of each month. Our meeting place is Lone Tree Civic Center, 8527 Lone Tree Pkwy, in Lone Tree. Meetings start promptly at 6:30 PM and will end by 9:00 PM after we breakdown the chairs and tables in the room. Get a Google Map by clicking here.

6 Creative Macro Background Tips

By Russ Burden

Make your macro images pop by controlling the background

I primarily photograph wildlife. This means I seldom work in a controlled environment. I love the challenge of capturing subjects in natural light, in their own environment and on their terms. But when it comes to flowers, which don't move, and some insects that have been raised under controlled conditions, I sometimes succumb and take charge of the entire shoot: lighting, background and positioning of them.

Since many of us have a little more free time on our hands these days, there's never been a better time to find some macro subjects in your own backyard. Here are six macro background tips and tricks.

Artificial Background Materials

I often use an artificial background, which is simply a sheet of colored or hand-painted cardboard. I usually use a sheet of black oaktag, but when I want a more natural look, I use one that's solid green or one that I've painted a mottled green.

Illuminating With Flash

My main lights are flash and I incorporate anywhere from two to four units. If the background piece is a solid color, its placement isn't as critical. If I use my hand-painted mottled version, I place it out of the range of focus of the aperture at which I make the photo. I do this so the mottling on the cardboard appears to blend together in a soft and pleasant way.

Flash To Control Light

I use flash as it gives me full control of the light. I can individually adjust the output of each, so if I want to provide a highlight on one side of the subject, I simply increase the power of the flash on that side. As a result, I can produce any light ratio I desire. I always use one flash on the right side of my subject and another on the left. If I power them evenly, it gives the appearance of even wraparound light. If I increase the power of one and base my aperture on its given output, I create the look of a stronger light source coming from either the right or left. I base this on my desired composition and the effect I want in the end.

Flash To Control Background

I can also control the background via the use of flash. To accomplish this, I add a small third flash that I keep close to the piece of cardboard behind the subject. I have the option of moving that flash closer to the cardboard to brighten the background or doing the opposite to darken it. I can also power it up or down to create the same effect. In some cases, it's good to show off what's behind the subject and in others, it's best to subdue it.

Creating A Black Background

To create a black background, I have two options. The simplest is to use black illustration board and not light it. The second comes about as a result of using two flashes as my main light.

Since light from a flash falls off very quickly, if I power up my two main lights so I have to use an aperture of $f/16$ or $f/22$, even if I have a green board behind the subject, it will go black as a result of light falloff. If I'm in the field on a sunny day at noon and I want a black background, this is the technique I use.

If I were to use an aperture of $f/8$ or $f/11$, there's enough daylight to light up the background. But if I stop my aperture all the way down and use high-speed flash sync so I can attain a shutter speed of 1/1,000th of a second, my background will be totally dark.

I sometimes like the look of a black background as it makes the subject pop. The subject becomes the only part of the photo that receives light so the viewer's eye is brought directly to the primary focal point.

If a lack of separation between some petals occurs or if the flower and the black background merge, I use my third flash to backlight the subject. This provides a halo or rim light that adds even more drama to the photograph.

All images in this article © Russ Burden

Overcast Conditions

If it's an overcast day and the background goes black but I want to depict detail, I simply lower the shutter speed to let in ambient light. Experiment using slower and slower shutter speeds until you achieve the look you crave.

Be sure to use a tripod in this situation in case you need to slow down the shutter to speeds in the 1/30th of a second range. The more creative you can become with your small flashes, the more dynamic your macro subjects will appear.

Visit www.russburdenphotography.com for information about his nature photography tours and safari to Tanzania.

Local Photo News

PhotographyLife posts All Courses for Free

We are very excited to announce our decision to make all of our photography courses free for our readers. That's right, starting from this month, our premium courses (valued at $150 each) will be available on YouTube, with no strings attached!

We spent many months filming our courses both indoors and in remote locations, in order to provide the best education we can possibly deliver to our readers. With the world dealing with possibly one of the worst health and economic crises the world has ever seen, we thought it would be a good idea to give away everything we got to our community. We hope that these courses will help our readers in getting solid photography content to learn from, for many years to come.

Read all the details here. The first course is on Youtube now – the others will be posted soon.

Quarantined by Gwen Piña

Mike's Camera Opens all CO Stores

They just announced the reopening of all their Colorado stores.

Safety features are in place, along with curbside pickup if you don't want to go into the store. Get all the details at the Mike's Camera website.

Program & Competition Meetings

Program Schedule		Competition Schedule	
05/08/20	**Program** – A personal journey towards photo advocacy by Scott Wilson	05/27/20	**Subject** – Open
06/12/20	**Program** – Tell Me a Story by Lars Gesing	06/24/20	**Subject** – Reflections
07/10/20	**Program** – Be Your Own Best Judge by Russ Burden	07/22/20	**Subject** – Long Exposure
07/29/20	Member Critique Meeting		

May 8 Program with Scott Wilson

'A personal journey towards photo advocacy'

Landscape & wildlife photographer, Scott Wilson, shares his self-taught love affair with photography, starting with a Nottinghamshire (UK) camera club, tackling multiple genres and 'breaking through', before making a dream move to Colorado, in 2015.

That dream turned nightmare with a stage 4 colon cancer diagnosis that threatened his life and his landscape photography pursuits, due to chemo-induced photosensitivity. So, Scott shot wildlife from the protective shade of his car and turned his new nature portfolio into a platform for cancer advocacy.

Tied Up by Sam Alexander

This Program meeting will be held via Zoom and all members will be notified with the meeting details.

This Month's Competition is Open

The official definition - *"The Open category allows photographers to submit images of any subject matter. Members are encouraged to explore photographic techniques and subjects outside their usual style."*

We continue holding our meetings online via Zoom this month. **Therefore, only Digital Submissions for this competition AND you can only submit a total of 2 images.**

Judge will be **Russ Burden**

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.

April 'Workers / People at Work' Competition Results

	Media	Artist	Image Title	Score
f5.6	Color Digital	Terry Hanford	Woody Works a Warble	9
f8	Color Digital	Ernie Kuemmerer	Sculptor Carving Stone	9
f11	B&W Digital	Ally Green	The Waiter	10
		Joe Razes	The Sentinel	10
		Joe Razes	Ouch	10
	Color Digital	Lucius Ashby	Elmos' On Break	9
		Victoria Ashby	Stand Out	9
		Bill Dickson	Rounding Them Up	9
		Dave Hull	Cooking Snacks for the Market	9
		Rand Smith	Trawling	9
		Lucius Ashby	Selling Dogs	10
		Victoria Ashby	Staying Inside the Lines	10
		Bill Dickson	Small business in Cuba	10
		Ally Green	The Winemaker	10
		Dave Hull	Burma Shopkeeper	10
		Gwen Paton	Retirement is not an Option	10
		Gwen Paton	A Dusty Buffalo Roundup	10
f16	B&W Digital	Sam Alexander	Water Break	9
		Cliff Lawson	Rodeo Announcer	9
		Nancy Myer	Pedestrian Overpass	9
		Sam Alexander	Tied Up	10
		Cliff Lawson	The Constructor	10
		Butch Mazzuca	Malt Shop Waitress After Hours	10
		Gwen Piña	Quarantined	10
		Dick York	Glass Artist	10
	Color Digital	Todd Lytle	Una Cerveza Por Favor	9
		Todd Lytle	Finishing Touch	9
		Gwen Piña	Falling for Fall	9
		Joe Bonita	I See You too!	10
		Brian Donovan	Blue Hour	10
		Larry Hartlaub	Careful, Wet Cement	10
		Butch Mazzuca	The Radio Call	10
		Nancy Myer	City Park Colonnade	10
		Oz Pfenninger	Cloth Printing in India	10
		Oz Pfenninger	The Director	10

Judge for this competition was Travis Broxton. See all the winning images in the Online Gallery.

Remember to send your winning Print images to Webmaster@FocusColorado.com for the online galleries. And please use the same naming conventions and image sizes as we do for Digital Submissions.

Photo Contests

KingBirder – Shelter and Snap

Special contest for May 2020 – submit photos of birds from your residence, could be a window, rooftop, balcony, garden, or yard. The photos **must** also be taken during the open period of the contest, May 1 - May 31 Visit the Kingbirder wesbite for details and entry info.

Frame #37

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

— A Hummingbird drone inside a Monarch butterfly swarm. A beautiful video!!

— List of upcoming online seminars sponsored by Tamron. Free education while you're #stuckathome

— **Making the Most of Any Weather & Light Webinar** – mentioned in the last newsletter, this session was recorded. You can go see it for free on Youtube.

— Can't get out to a national park now? Visit a few of them through video tours at Google Arts & Culture

> Good Photos come from Experience. Experience comes from Bad Photos.
>
> – Nigel Danson

The Constructor by Cliff Lawson

Burma Shopkeeper by Dave Hull