

Los Gatos - Saratoga Camera Club Newsletter

Vol. 30 Issue 10

October 2008

2008 Calendar

October

- 2 The Art of Photography - Reception 6 to 8 pm
Town of Los Gatos Council Chambers,
110 East Main Street
- 6 Competition Color and Creative (slides/digital/prints)
Monochrome(prints)
- 20 Program Member 15-Image Presentations
(maximum of 15 images digital, film, or
prints)

November

- 3 Competition Color and Nature (slides/digital/prints)
- 13 The Art of Photography Exhibit Removal - 12 to 1pm
- 17 Program The Pervasive Influence of Renaissance
Painting Qualities on Photography
presented by Arthur Stein



© Dick Stuart



© Dick Stuart

Program October 20

“Member 15-Image Presentations” will be the program on October 20, 2008. Any member may submit up to 15 related images for presentation to the entire Club. Here's your opportunity to delve into a photographic subject in detail and share it with us. This annual event highlights the diverse, creative, and excellent photography being done by members of our Club. It is always a stimulating and entertaining evening. Please indicate your intention to give a presentation by e-mailing Virginia Scott at vmorganscott@comcast.net

The Art of Photography Show

Don't forget to attend reception for the “The Art of Photography” show at the Los Gatos Town Council Chambers on Thursday October 2nd from 6 to 8 PM. Exhibitors bringing food to the reception should plan to be there by 5:30 PM.

“Nature”: Traditional and Current Definition in the Nature Community¹

by Pat Wadecki

The rules for Nature competitions have traditionally been designed to keep nature images as true to the reality of the nature story as possible. Rules were simple and fairly easily understood: *no “hand of man” and no techniques that are typically considered “alterations of reality”.*

Nature images were captured on transparency film and standard field techniques included the use of filters such as polarizers, warming, and graduated neutral density filters. Film offered options which included color and temperature bias, more or less saturation and contrast. Entries in the nature slide category were judged not only for the content but for their use of good field techniques. Nature print makers who used the wet darkroom used simple darkroom techniques that allowed a print to be made which showed the scene in its best “light”. Dodging and burning were typically used, as were filters that removed unnatural color casts. Minor blemishes, such as annoying highlights were often deemphasized by using Marshall dyes. These transparent dyes were sometimes used to enhance pale colors, as for example to increase the yellow of a pale beak on a bird. Thus prints were expected to be judged not only for their content and good field techniques but also for good printing techniques and presentation.

When digital capture and printing entered the scene, nature photographers were most concerned that digital techniques not be allowed which would change nature entries from their emphasis on good field techniques and simple darkroom techniques. It is certainly the desire of serious nature photographers that nature

competitions reward nature photography and not complex Photoshop techniques. If one were to look at prestigious international nature contests it is clear that they reflect this philosophy also. The following are examples:

Shell Wildlife Photographer of the year (formally BBC): Digital adjustments are only acceptable if limited to minor cleaning work, levels, curves, color, saturation and contrast work. The faithful representation of a natural form, behavior or phenomenon must be maintained. Compositing and multiple exposures are not allowed. Sharpening is allowed. Cropping is allowed... ensure your images are not oversaturated and faithfully represent the subject matter.

Nature Conservancy and National Wildlife Federation: All photographs should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appeared. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (removal of dust, cropping, adjustments to color and contrast, etc.) will be disqualified.

Nature’s Best International Awards: All photographs must accurately reflect the subject matter as it appeared in the viewfinder. Nothing should be added to an image and, aside from dust spots, nothing should be taken away. Normal processing of RAW image files and minor adjustments to color and contrast are acceptable, as is minimal cropping.

Beyond these contests, it appears that the nature photographer is sometimes slightly more liberal. CACCA nature enthusiasts have tried to preserve the essence of the

¹ Reprinted from the May 2008 THE CACCA NEWS - Published October through May by the Chicago Area Camera Clubs Association.

pre-digital rules, feeling that it is appropriate to use simple digital techniques that “enhanced the image” but did not “manipulate” or “manufacture” an image. The rule of thumb for most became that Photoshop techniques used could be such as those which handle exposure (brightness, levels, curves, etc.), saturation, removal of color casts, warming, removal of minor blemishes (spots, scratches, artifacts of sharpening) but not of elements in the subject matter. Lightening of areas through dodging techniques, and de-emphasis of certain areas of the image through the darkening of burning techniques are commonly used since these were standard techniques in the wet darkroom. CACCA rules currently clearly state that elements should not be removed or added.

For decades the wording of CACCA nature rules were simply taken from the PSA nature rules with a few modifications. PSA did not allow captive animals such as zoo and game farms, considering these NOT to be wildlife. PSA says, “Authentic Wildlife is defined as one or more organisms living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat.” CACCA removed that restriction. Further PSA states that, “The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed MORE THAN the pictorial quality”. CACCA asks that the story telling value of a photograph must be weighed ALONG WITH the pictorial quality.

Once again it might be wise for CACCA to turn to PSA for guidance. The PSA rules are simple and strive for what is called “digital realism”. They state: “Makers may perform any enhancements and

modifications that improve the presentation of the image that could have been done at the time the image was taken but that does not change the truth of the original nature story. Cropping and horizontal flipping (equivalent to reversing a slide) are acceptable modifications. Addition of elements, removal of elements (other than by cropping), combining elements from separate images, rearranging elements or cloning elements are not acceptable.” It is important to note that in the nature competition arena both in PSA and in international contests it is clear that it is not allowed that separate images be combined.

Some may want the rules to be more specific wanting to know exactly which Photoshop techniques are “legal”. Trying to add to the CACCA rules a list of specific techniques that can or cannot be used will only end in frustration since new digital techniques are constantly being introduced. For example, the use of RAW capture has now necessitated a whole new post capture processing that was not required previously. CACCA rules should, as do the PSA rules, espouse a simple statement rather than a list of techniques.

It is currently a challenge given to CACCA to assess its nature rules and find a way to simply state what is deemed acceptable. It would be hoped that in doing so that CACCA would keep in mind the commonly held perspectives of the nature community at large and preserve what has been and still is the essence of that special type of photography called “nature photography”.

Board Contacts:

President	Bernie Weinzimmer	408.741.0499
Membership	Mark Emanuel	408.264.1861
Editor	Dick Stuart	408.267.3397
Programs	Virginia Scott	831.427.1394
Webmaster	Airdrie Kincaid	408.247.3743
www.losgatos-saratogacameraclub.org		

The official publication of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Camera Club. Meetings : first and third Mondays, 7:30PM at the Elks Club, No 1857 of Los Gatos, 105 Newell Ave. (At Winchester near Lark). Member of the Photographic Society of America.