

FOCUS



Newsletter of the Mayslake Nature Study and Photography Club
Hosted by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Visit our website at www.naturecameraclub.com

Non-Competitive Critique

*August 3
Flower Photography
by Michael Kobe*

*August 17
Critique Night*

*Welcome new
member Adele
Mitchell*



The non-competitive critique gives members a chance to get an evaluation of their images outside of the club's regular competition. There is no scoring, no judging, just an informal, but informative critiquing! It is a great learning opportunity because there is time to discuss details and ask questions outside of the time limitations and structure of the regular competition.

Our panel of "critiquers" will review images submitted by members and offer their opinions about the technical and creative aspects of the images. The critiquers for the evening will be our members Gail Chastain, Marcia Nye and Steve Orberg. Gail and Steve were our Image of the Year makers for 2014 and 2015 and Marcia has won numerous awards for both her print and digital images.

- *Are you thinking about doing competition this year but hesitant to submit your first image?*
- *Would you like to get another opinion about an image that you like?*
- *Are you curious about how a particular image might do during judging?*
- *Don't compete, but want to learn more about making a great image?*

If the answer to any of these questions is "YES," then here's your chance. If you are interested, please submit up to three images by **August 9th** to Sue Gajda at segnet1025@yahoo.com.

Images should be sized according to the competition guidelines on our website, .jpg format with landscape orientation images no bigger than 1024 pixels wide or portrait images no more than 768 pixels tall. Images should generally follow competition content requirements but we're flexible! Just name your images with your last name and an image number (1,2,3). We will try to critique all three of your images, but that depends on how many images we receive. We will make sure that everyone who submits images has a least one image reviewed so number your first choice as 1, second choice as 2 etc. Maker identification will not be displayed during the critique.

Flower Photography August 3rd

Michael Kobe

The presentation will share my favorite techniques for capturing and enhancing images of flowers, both wild and garden. No matter if your photographic nature pursuits are landscapes, animals, or plants, you will find this presentation interesting and informative. I will share my knowledge of Botany and tips on how and where to take that award winning flower shot.

Qualities of a good close-up flower composition [Impact] should answer the question *does it create a feeling or emotion?* This is achieved by having the correct leading lines pulling the viewer to the blossom, which is popped by a blurred background [Bokeh] and/or appropriate depth-of-field.

The lighting is also essential to make the flower pop. Use soft light (no burned-out sections associated with harsh light), supplemental side light (toned shadows), and proper positing so there are no strong shadows

After you have captured the photo that you want, enhance it further with editing software on your computer. By using the techniques in the presentation you will not only achieve quality images but experience satisfaction as a photographer who can capture and share flower images.

Biographical Information:

Michael is a retired Biologist. After teaching for forty-four years, he decided to pursue his interest in the out-of-doors through photography. He has mastered the skills of nature photography and shares them through extensive workshops, seminars, and field trips with others. His photographs have been utilized extensively in the Indiana Dunes National Park publications. He is recognized for his nature photography, especially in his skills of capturing images of insects, flowers, and birds. He has won many awards with his photographs and was honored by the Chicago Area Camera Clubs Association [CACCA] with the prestigious Kohout Nature Award in 2009 and the Grace DeWolf Nature Photography Award in 2011. Some of his recent achievements were: first place in the 2012 Brookfield Zoo photography contest, first place in the 2012 Indiana State Fair, 2013 Grand prize winner in the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve/St. Petersburg, Florida Nature Photography contest, first prize *Department of the Interior Nature Photography contest for Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge in Seymour, IN,* and *Best of Show at CACCA in January and February 2013.* He also won *Best of Show in the annual CACCA Salon in 2014 for Monochrome.* He currently belongs to three CACCA clubs: *Calumet Region, Digital Darkroom, and Oak Lawn.* He is a *founding father of the Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center and has served as president and has been on the Board since its inception fifteen years ago.*

**August Outing
Chicago Botanic Garden
August 23, 2015**

Join your fellow club members for a morning summer photo shoot at the Chicago Botanic Garden on August 23, followed by lunch at the Garden Café. Located in Glencoe, the garden consists of 26 gardens on 385 acres, and many photographic opportunities. There is an exhibit of student botanical photography that opens the week before, as well as the Butterflies and Blooms and Model Railroad Garden exhibits. Admission is free, but parking is \$30. per car. There is a reciprocal agreement for free parking with a current membership at the Morton Arboretum. (An extra charge applies for the Butterflies and Railroad Exhibits.) Email Barbara Dunn at bdunn23@sbcglobal.net if interested by August 20 for details on this outing.



EXHIBITS

Janice Henry

Our current exhibit "Insects & Flowers" is in its final month. You have until the 30th of August to view this exhibit. It's not too late to participate in the next exhibit, "State Parks & National Parks". I need you to send the following information to me at jnhenr@att.net :

- ⤴ Title(s)
- ⤴ Size(s)
- ⤴ Do you want to sell? (optional)
- ⤴ Price(s) (if you want to sell)

Remember:

- ⤴ "Hands of Man" does not apply to exhibits (bridges, fences etc are OK)
- ⤴ Saw tooth hangers do not work with our hanging system. Please use frames without saw tooth hangers
- ⤴ A wire needs to be attached to the back about 1/3 of the way down and the sharp ends taped to protect the walls of our host facility. Blue painters tape works well for this.

If you have an image from the print competition and would like to have that in the exhibit, let me know when you send the title, etc. I have two frames that can be borrowed.

The next exhibit will be hung on Monday, August 31st. The images need to be dropped off either at the meeting on Monday, August 3rd, the special meeting on Monday, August 17th or to the office at Mayslake during regular business hours Monday-Friday from 9 AM-4 PM until Friday, August 28th.

Call for Art

In honor of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's centennial celebration, Mayslake Peabody Estate is planning an art exhibit to showcase the 100 years of inspiration the forest preserves have provided artists. We will be accepting your submissions of drawings, paintings, photographs, prints, or any other hangable art that presents our preserves through the artist's eye.

Email Mollie Fullerton at mfullerton@dupageforest.org by September 30 if you're interested in being part of this exhibit. Please be sure to include the following information in your email:

- Your name
- The title of your artworks(s)
- The price of your piece(s) if for sale
- The medium used to create your piece(s)
- The dimensions of your piece(s)
- If you are submitting multiple works, your preference for which work is displayed if we cannot fit all pieces in the show

Once we receive your email we will send you more detailed information or answer any questions you might have.

Dates to know:

Email Mollie by **September 30**

Art drop off at Mayslake Peabody Estate: **October 31: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Exhibit dates: **November 3 – December 9**

If we receive more works of art than we can accommodate, a panel of visual artists who teach at Mayslake will make selections to fill the show.

Thank you!

Mayslake Outing to DayBreak Sanctuary Alma, IL July 26, 2015



Tom Richardson Yellow Swallowtail

After some morning rain, the weather cooperated with us as we shot butterflies, dragonflies, hummingbirds, and flowers at DayBreak Sanctuary in Alma, Illinois. After a brief orientation by Richard and Susan Day, we were able to wander the 60 acre property, exploring the butterfly gardens, wildflower prairie, and water wetlands.

As the clouds began to clear and the temperature began to rise, the dragonflies and butterflies gave us opportunities for many images. As usual, both Richard and Susan were there to help with questions, both on photographic techniques and on critter identification.



Ellie Young

Hummingbird



JoAnn Barnes

Halloween Dragonfly

It was a fun time, with many opportunities for making photos!



Barbara Dunn

Spider



Janice Henry

Yellow Swallowtail



Sue Gajda

Blue Dragonfly



Steve Ormberg

Caterpillar



Fred Drury

Monarch

*Coming in October:
"Focus Stacking: The
Good, the Bad, the
Ugly," by Ken
Thompson*

This is the first in a new series of Drury's Digital Diary columns which will appear regularly in FOCUS. Please let me know if you have any questions, suggestions, or comments. I always look forward to your feedback.

Why Compete?

When you decided to join a photo club, it was probably with the thought in mind that you would like to use this as a way of improving your photography. Club meetings provide members the opportunity to view lots of images, generally lots of very good images, produced by capable and experienced photographers. Club outings encourage you to make images in attractive locations working alongside others having a similar interest, and who are generally more than willing to share their experience and expertise with others. As you become more aware of the photographic skills of Club members, you'll invariably notice that most of the better photographers, either currently or in the past have regularly participated in Club competitions. Is there a relationship between skill development and competition? IMHO¹ the answer is a very emphatic 'YES'.

Here's WHY I think this is the case. If you've looked at a lot of images of a common subject you've probably noticed that most all photographers who've developed basic technical and composition skills produce remarkably similar results, BUT the really skilled photographers seem uniquely capable of adding just that little extra stuff that Will Clay describes as 'separating a photograph from a picture'. Now Will is generally referring to some smallish compositional element that the photographer has incorporated in their composition. To me it can mean a significant number of issues, some technical, some compositional and some having to do with impact, but any and all of which make the significant difference. Here's an undoubtedly incomplete list of such issues: uses full tonal range, just right sharpening, darkens edges, right time of day (proper contrast), control of depth-of-field, optimum lighting, placement of subject, and range of detail in subject.

And how is it that better photographers have developed the ability to 'see' these attributes to a degree that others have not. Certainly practice and the number of images one shoots play a factor. But to an overwhelming degree I think the experience gained by photographers who regularly compete makes up most of the difference. Why so? Because competition forces you to look at images more critically ... to better see those issues that otherwise would seem relatively unimportant. Regular participation in competition trains your eye to see these small details and also contributes to your knowledge of how to correct them. If you listen carefully to good judges, you'll hear them suggest simple techniques for correcting image shortcomings.

¹ In my humble opinion

If it's your image they're discussing, you'll listen more carefully, as they will be giving you a roadmap to a better image.

What does it take to compete; mostly just overcoming the inertia to get started. You do have to learn how to prepare an image for digital competition and/or how to mount a print on a competition board. But just as there are club members who are willing to share their field skills, there are members who'll be glad to help you get started in competition. You'll probably have to brush up on your computer skills and knowledge of image-optimization software, but that's the nature of today's digital world. More importantly, it is a fundamental part of becoming a better photographer.

Over the twenty-some years I've been active in camera clubs, I've seen a great number of photographers start up competing in Class C, and I've seen most move on to Class B and many move on to Class A. The progression is certain if you persist. It brings with it a continuing sense of satisfaction that you are accomplishing the goal you started out with: 'a way of improving your photography'.

Next month I will be explaining my initial reactions to digital photography from the point-of-view of an underwater photography. In coming months I will be addressing issues which show how different digital photography is from film photography and in the process offer some suggestions of how to take full advantage of those differences.