

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



Highlights

November 5
Preparing Images
for Competition
Fred Drury

Non-Competitive Critique

November 19
Prairie Watching
Lloyd and Mary McCarthy

December 3
Competition

December 17
Christmas Party

Prairie Watching
Lloyd and Mary McCarthy

The Tall Grass Prairie of the midwest is a very special ecosystem. For over 40 years the McCarthys have been visiting northern Illinois prairie remnants and restorations and photographing the native flora and fauna which make the biome unique. Their program defines what constitutes a prairie and tries to convey an appreciation of our Illinois prairie heritage.

Nature Photography
Dr. Lloyd McCarthy, FPSA

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY - Not one, but two words: **NATURE** and **PHOTOGRAPHY**. Each compliments the other. For me, Nature preceded Photography. From the hard seat of a plow behind a slow team of horses I became familiar with southwestern Minnesota's "Tall Grass Prairie" species. It was some years later that I learned the principles of recording the many facets of nature on film, which is still my medium. Then on joining the Photographic Society of America I found that the Nature Division is keenly aware that Nature and Photography are two words as evidenced by its statement that in competition "the value of the nature story outweighs the pictorial quality of the image."

In keeping with this tenet when I photograph native botanical species, in addition to creating an intimate image, I also try to produce views which include identifying features of the plant and, when possible, of its habitat. It is these images which are most useful for instructional purposes in the classroom.

Continued on Page 2

Welcome New Members

Jane Ballengee
Jo Eldridge
Diane Nestad

A photographer of nature must also be a naturalist. Research and observation of the nature subject can be as enjoyable as the photographic endeavor itself.

Together, Mary and I have found nature subjects worldwide, but as the years pass, our “studio” becomes smaller and less exotic. However, we live in an area where remnants of the Midwest prairies and their islands of hardwood savannas still exist. Here familiar species bloom in progression from March to November. We know where and when to find them but still must contend with the vagaries of weather--wind, rain and even sun--guaranteeing that we will be returning another day for the one great image. It may be tomorrow, next week or next year, but it will be waiting for us.

But do not forget the second word: **PHOTOGRAPHY**. Over forty years ago we joined a camera club which has a strong emphasis on **NATURE**, but photographic basics were taught and ingrained in club members. In today’s digital world, those basics still exist, but there is so much more. The digital camera is a computer with its own set of functions and a host of new terms.

When you know your camera, the photographic basics and your nature subject, the **NATURE** and **PHOTOGRAPHY** meld together and become an entity--one word and the natural world awaits you.



Barrier
Noriko Buckles

CACCA Results October Competition

The first CACCA competition of this year was held on Saturday October 13. It was the first competition in which our club participated as two entities, Mayslake I and Mayslake II. This ‘First time around’ worked well and we came away with 3 Awards, 1 HM and a strange ‘incomplete’. First to congratulate our winners. In the Digital Image competition a score of 24 and an AW went to Pei Tang for her image titled, ‘Eye to Eye’. Tom Richardson also received a score of 24 and an HM for his image titled, ‘Dove Sip’.

There also was a mistake made in the Digital competition, one which very likely cost Lou Petkus an award. Here is what happened. In the scoring round, his image titled, ‘The Eagle is Landing’ received a 26, the only 26 and the highest score of all images. Somehow, when the elimination rounds began, his image and another which scored 25 were overlooked and only the nineteen images that received 24’s were considered. When the officials realized this oversight, it was too late to start the elimination round over. Lou’s image will be directly entered in the elimination round next month.

In the print competition, we also had two winning images both with scores of 24. Both received AW’s. They were Marcia Nye for her print titled, ‘Classic Maine’ and Tom Richardson for his image titled, ‘Morning Song’. We will have another group of images from our first Mayslake competition to enter in the November CACCA competition on the 10th. Congratulations to Pei, Marcia and Tom for these outstanding images.

Competition Sheila Newenham

Our first competition of the year was held October 1st. We had 68 digital images and 27 print images. Special thanks to John Janunas, John Fan and Ken Harris for judging and critiquing these images. I want to say again how helpful it was to have all of you name your images according to the club viewer specifications. It really shortened the amount of time it takes to make all of this happen. I appreciate the help of Marie Ward, Marcia Nye, Barbara Dunn, D DeMet and Tom Richardson in making this competition run smoothly.

Congratulations to the following who earned honors:

Class C Digital Awards

Barrier by Noriko Buckles
Siblings by Noriko Buckles
Eastern Bluebird by Greg Hull
Honorable Mentions
Dandelion by Suzanne Zumstein
Waterfall by Suzanne Zumstein
Sandhill Cranes by Greg Hull
Green Frog by Steve Bartos
Morning Blues by Steven Mayer

Class B Digital Awards

Gray Hawk by Marcia Nye
Reflection Canyon VII by Harry Hitzeman
Honorable Mentions
Prevailing Westerlies by Bill Dixon
Target in Sight by Chuck Klingsporn
Osprey Nest by Marcia Nye
Sweet Painted Lady by David Schooley

Class A Digital Awards

Juvenile Trumpeter Swan by Fred Drury
Eye to Eye by Pei Tang
Golden by Pei Tang
Let Me See by Pei Tang
Honorable Mentions
The Eagle is Landing by Lou Petkus
Dove Sip by Tom Richardson

Class B Prints Awards

Cadillac Sunset by Marcia Nye
Classic Maine by Marcia Nye
The Perfect Perch by Marcia Nye
Honorable Mentions
The King by Sue Gajda
Tough Old Cedar by Chuck Klingsporn

Class A Prints Award

Morning Song by Tom Richardson
Honorable Mention
My Perch by Tom Richardson

The next competition is December 3rd. If you missed the first competition, you can submit make-up images in any of the upcoming competitions. Make-ups are not eligible for honors but do count toward your total score. Digital images are due by midnight Sunday, November 25th at competition@mlnpc.com



Dove Sip
Tom Richardson

Camp Sagawau October 6



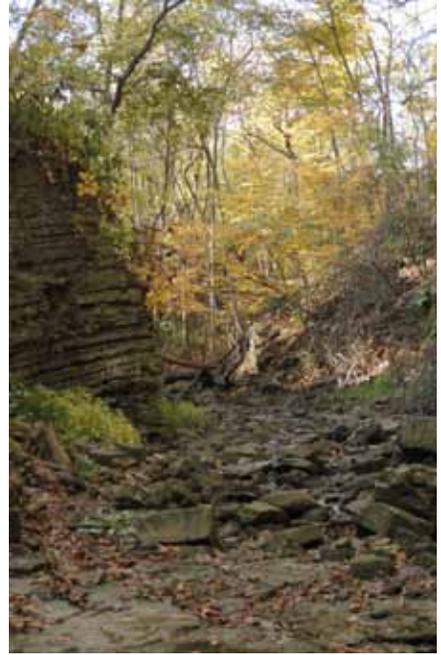
Karin Grunow

Sagawau Environment Center in Lemont had something for everyone, and it was a group of 18 people that met to enjoy it. With over 140 acres of forest, and grasslands there is always lots to photograph. But the highlight of the outing was the 900 foot long canyon, Cook County's only canyon. Normally this is only accessible by guided tour, but we had the opportunity to spend some time on our own. Once the "rules" were explained to us, we split the group up in two, with ½ going into the canyon, and the other ½ enjoying the trails of

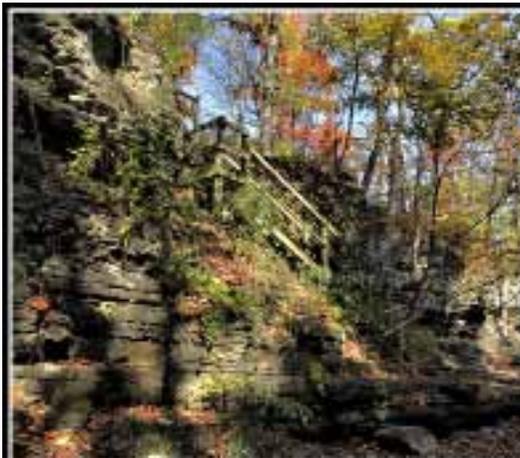
Sagawau. After a while we switched so all had time to spend in both very different environments.

The outing ending with lunch and good company!!

Be sure to visit the Mayslake Website under the Trip Blog to see the images from the outing. Don't forget to click on the "I" icon to see who took the image.



Diane Hamernik



Stairs
Marcia Nye



© Duane E. Heaton

Shadow on a Sunlit Leaf
Duane Heaton



Rose Janulis



Noriko Buckles

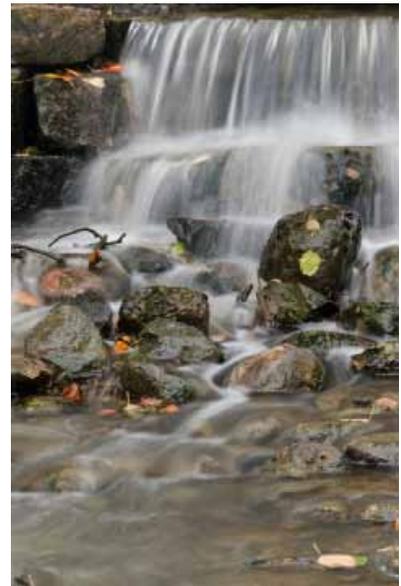
**4th Monday Outing
October 22
Cantigny Park in Lisle, IL**

It was a nice warm fall day at Cantigny for 13 of Mayslakers and guests. The gardens were all dress in mums and scarecrows and the clouds added a natural diffuser. Although the skies seem to threaten the day, the coming storm held off until after breakfast.



Structure
Sheila Newenham

Be sure to visit the Mayslake Website Trip Blog to see the images from the outing. And don't forget to click on the "I" icon to see the titles.



Steve Baginski



Paul Haring

Club Officers

President

Sue Gajda
segnet@aol.com

Vice-President, Nature

Harry Hitzeman
hhhitzeman@gmail.com

Vice-President, Photography

Lou Petkus
loupet@gmail.com

Treasurer

Karin Grunow
karin.grunow@att.net

Secretary

Fran Piepenbrink
frannep@netzero.net

2011-2012 Chairpersons

CACCA Delegate: Chuck Klingsporn
northrockies@aol.com

Competition: Sheila Newenham
drsnewenham@gmail.com

Conservation: Chuck Peterson
charpete@sbcglobal.net

Education: Fred Drury
fred@marklandimagining.com

Equipment: Dee DeMet/David Schooley
dcdemet@ameritech.net

Exhibits: Janice Henry
jnhenr@att.net

Forest Preserve Liaison:/Past President Tom Richardson
rtom.richardson@gmail.com

Membership: Bill Dixon
bmaxdixon@sbcglobal.net

Outings: Gail Chastain
gachastain@hotmail.com

Publications: Diane Hamernik
d.hamernik@comcast.net

Social: Barbara Dunn
bdunn23@sbcglobal.net

Webmasters: Suzanne Zumstein
s.zumstein@comcast.net
Steve Baginski
spbaginski@hotmail.com

SAVE THE DATE
> SATURDAY <
APRIL 13TH
-----2013-----



Green Frog
Steve Bartos



The Eagle is Landing
Lou Petkus

In the last column I dealt with Tone Curve basics: what the Curve does and the functionality contained in the Tone Curve panel. In this column, I'll show you how to draw some curves for real images.

As you examine the following examples, I expect you'll notice that the effect of the curves is quite subtle. This should not be surprising. The objective of the Basic panel adjustments was to do fundamental corrections to the image. The objective of the Tone Curve is to draw the viewer's attention to the primary subject of the image. The change produced by the curve is going to be small but targeted to moving the viewer's eye.

As I mentioned in the previous column, the Parametric Tone Curve includes a number of controls which help 'newby' curve-users take advantage of the considerable capability of this exceptional tool. I'll start out with a couple of examples using this curve mode.

Figure 1 is the first example. Both images (left and right) had the same Basic panel settings applied. The image on the right shows the effect of adding the Parametric Tone Curve to the image on the left. The goal is to draw the viewer's eye to the agave and the cloud at the top of Mt. Lemon. The curve shape chosen, as a starting point from the drop down (bottom right), is a Medium Contrast 'S' curve. Next the Highlights slider was moved to the right until the first indication of highlight clipping (red) appeared in the cloud above Mt. Lemon. Similarly, the Darks slider was moved to the left until the first indication of shadow clipping (blue) appeared on the agave. Note: curve adjustments interact with the previously completed Basic panel adjustments, so it's a good idea to check whether fine tuning of those adjustments is appropriate. Finally, the sliders along the bottom of the Parametric Tone

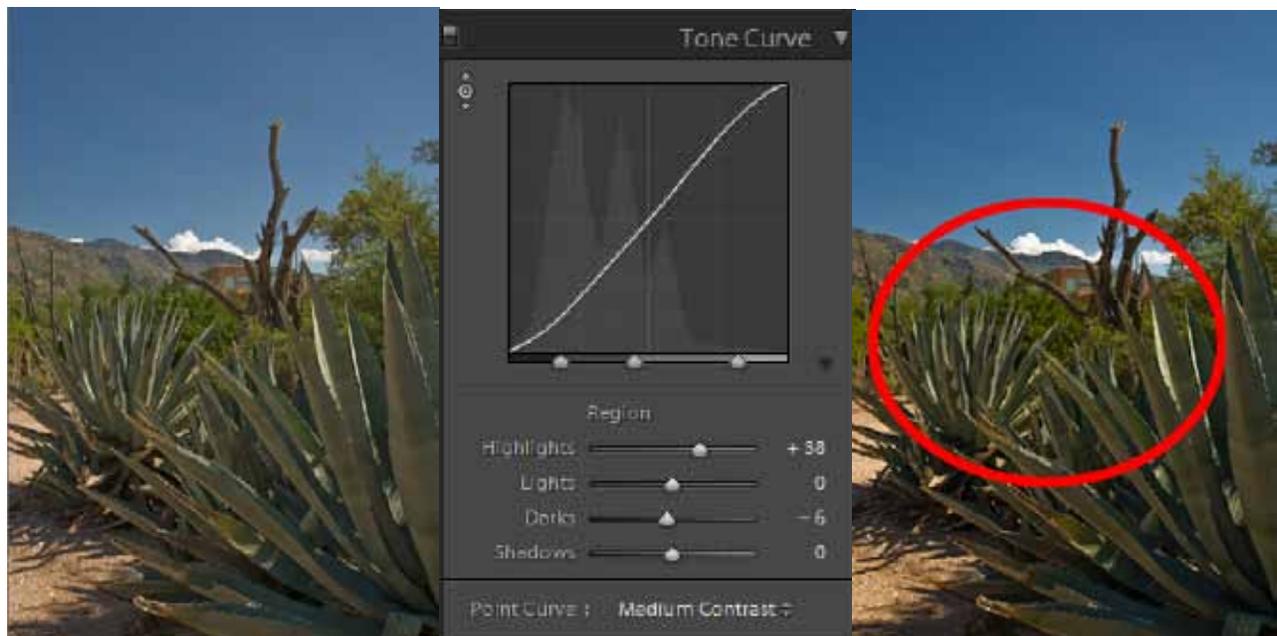


Figure 1 (above): An agave at the DeGrazia Museum. Both versions (left & right) have had Basic panel develop settings applied. The image on the right has the Parametric Tone Curve settings shown in the center panel added. Comparison shows the net effect of the curve.

Curve were tweaked: Highlights moved to the right, and both Darks and Shadows moved slightly to the left.

The overall effect of the Parametric Tone Curve in **Figure 1** is to lighten the cloud, but only slightly lighten the sky. The curve brightens the sunlit side of the agave stalks and slightly darkens the shaded side; the combined lightening and darkening adds contrast and so draws the viewer's eye. The curve also lightens the ground to the left of the agave and does the same to the lighter patches on the mountain side. The net result of the curve is to pull the viewer's eye into the region bounded by clouds and the agave which has been circled in red in the right side.

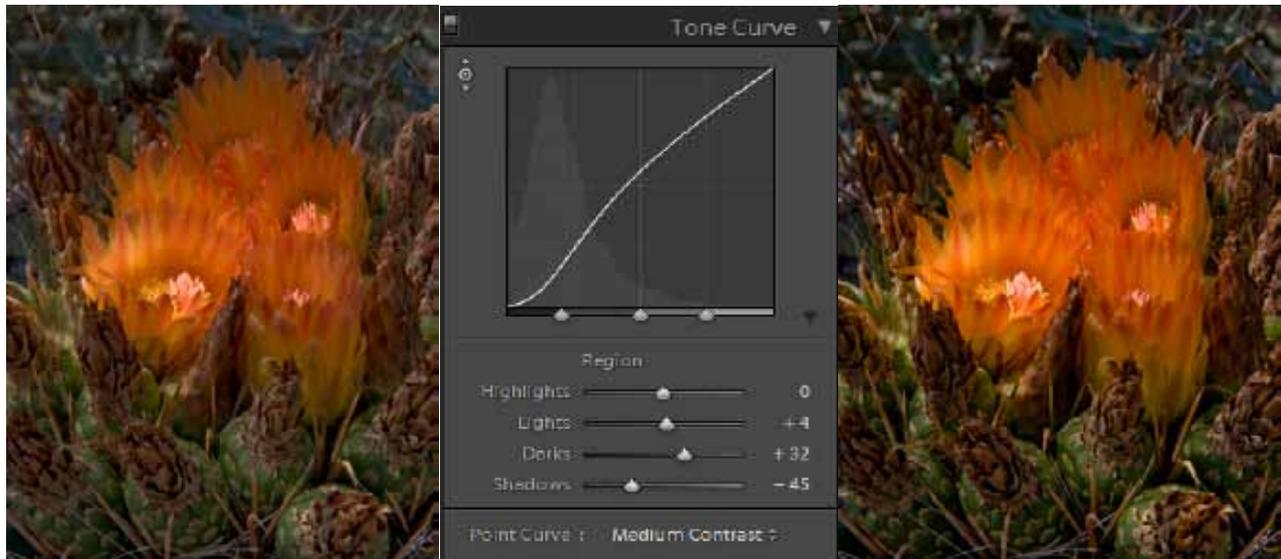


Figure 2 (below): Another example where both left and right have had Basic panel develop settings applied. The Parametric Tone Curve has also been applied to the image on the right.

Figure 2 is second example using the Parametric Tone Curve. The objective was to draw the viewers eye to the cactus flower but at the same time to retain substantial detail in the cactus because it is an integral part of the plant. Once again a Medium Contrast 'S' curve was the starting point. Turning the curve switch (top left) on and off showed this moved the image in the right direction but not far enough. So the next step was to move the Shadow slider to the left (darkening the plant) up to the point where the first shadow clipping occurred. Then move the Darks slider to the right and the Lights slider just slightly to the right. Both of these adjustments lightened the cactus flower. A final tweak of the regions sliders at the bottom of the Parametric Tone Curve completed the process.

As you gain experience with curves, the 'helping features' of the Parametric Tone Curve may become redundant, in which case you may come to prefer the Point Tone Curve. Following are a couple of examples using that curve mode.

Figure 3 shows an application of the Point Tone Curve. Clicking on the small curve icon at the bottom right of the Tone Curve panel switches one from the Parametric Curve to the

Point Curve¹. Using the Point Tone Curve is deceptively simple. Just click at any location on the curve and drag to a desired location. But where to start, and how far to move? The best starting point is to click on the TAT (to select it), then move the mouse over the image to a tonal value you'd like to change. As you move the TAT on the image, watch the 'bouncing ball' move along the curve. The position of the bouncing ball indicates the tonal value (in the image) under the mouse. When the TAT is over the tonal value you want to change, left click the mouse and drag it downwards to darken or upwards to lighten. The curve changes consistently with your movement of the TAT on the image.

The subject of **Figure 3** is the Brain Rock image last seen in the Basic panel discussion. The objective of the curve is to lighten the tree without changing the look of the brain rock. Here's the procedure used:

1. Start by choosing the Point Tone Curve in Linear mode.
2. Select the TAT tool.
3. Place the TAT (cursor) on the lower portion of the tree trunk; this identifies a point on the curve² corresponding to the luminance of the tree trunk, location 1 on the curve.

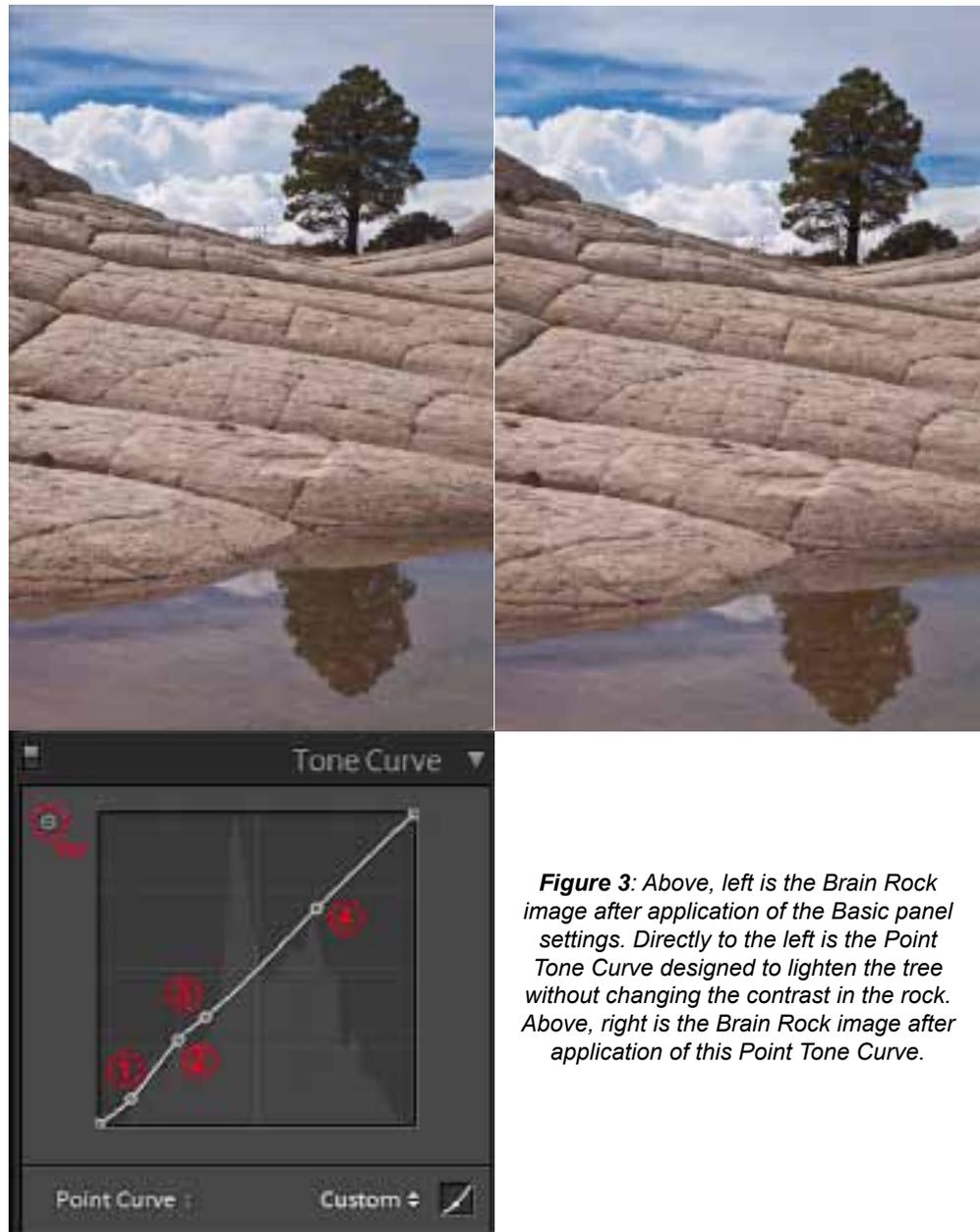


Figure 3: Above, left is the Brain Rock image after application of the Basic panel settings. Directly to the left is the Point Tone Curve designed to lighten the tree without changing the contrast in the rock. Above, right is the Brain Rock image after application of this Point Tone Curve.

¹ The most obvious change as you make this switch is that the controls at the bottom of the Parametric Tone Curve disappear.
² If you decide to delete a point from the curve, you can do so by moving the cursor over that point and dragging it all the way off of the curves grid.

4. Move the TAT to the lightest portion of the tree and click again, location 2.
5. Drag location 1 down slightly, which darkens the trunk.
6. Drag location 2 up, which lightens the needles in the tree. This also moves the upper half of the curve upwards which lightens the rock.
7. Once again select the TAT tool.

8. Move the TAT to the darkest part of the rock and click, location 3. Drag this location down to about where it started from.



Figure 4 shows the tree in the Brain Rock image before (left) and after (right) the application of the Point Tone Curve in Figure 3. The use of the TAT was important to the creation of the curve because it facilitated the precise identification of the luminance of the tree, its foliage and the lightest and darkest locations on the rock.

9. Correct the lightest part of the rock by clicking on the curve well above location 3. Move this location (4) back to where it started from. The result is a slight, but significant improvement.
10. **Figure 4** shows the tree (enlarged) before and after this curves move.

Figure 5 is another example using the Point Tone Curve. The image is California Brown Pelican in mating plumage, photographed in mid-January in LaJolla. The object of the curve is to further focus the eye on the bird. On the left is the image after application of the Basic panel. The TAT was used to select two locations on the bird, one on what is nearly the lightest location in the white feathers on the head, the other in the darker body feathers. Clicking with the TAT places a point on the curve at the selected location. The white head was lightened (by dragging the TAT upwards, while the body feathers were darkened. The latter produced an added benefit by darkening the sky. The darkening of the feathers actually produced some shadow clipping in the shoulder area outlined in red. The issue would be whether or not one considered this a significant shadow. In this case the maker did not.

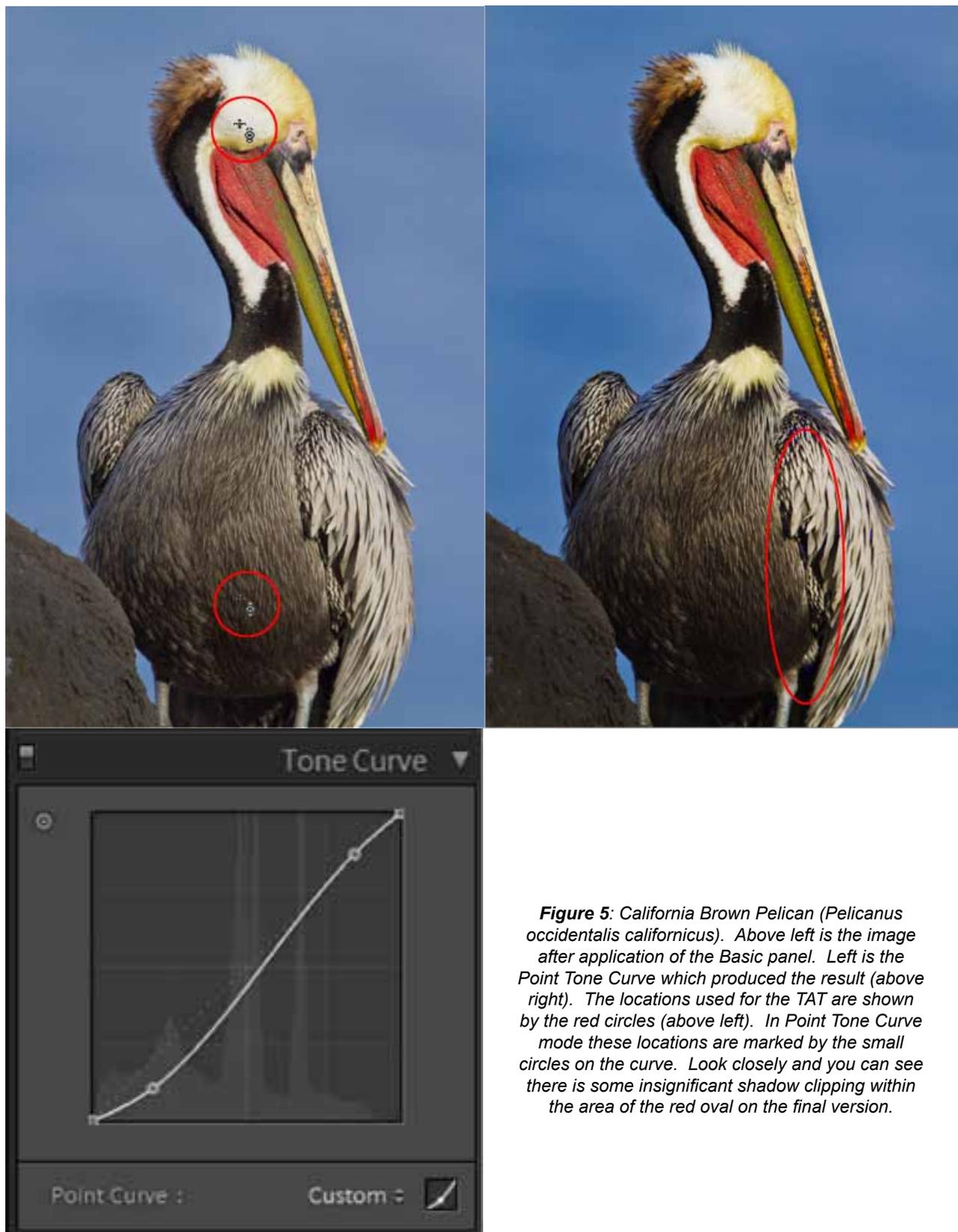


Figure 5: California Brown Pelican (*Pelicanus occidentalis californicus*). Above left is the image after application of the Basic panel. Left is the Point Tone Curve which produced the result (above right). The locations used for the TAT are shown by the red circles (above left). In Point Tone Curve mode these locations are marked by the small circles on the curve. Look closely and you can see there is some insignificant shadow clipping within the area of the red oval on the final version.

In the next column, I'll explain why sharpening is necessary and show you how to use Lightroom's especially effective sharpening tools.