

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

September 3

No Meeting

Labor Day



September 17

The North of Britain:
Birding the Shetland Islands
and the Scottish Highlands
Christine and Geoffrey Williamson

October 1

Competition

October 15

Preparing Images
for Competition
Fred Drury

November 5

Non-Competitive Critique

November 19

Prairie Definition
Lloyd and Mary McCarthy

December 3

Competition

December 17

Christmas Party

The North of Britain: Birding the Shetland Islands and the Scottish Highlands Christine and Geoffrey Williamson

Where can you see breeding colonies of Tammie Nories, Tysties, and Mallimokes? * Why the land of the Simmer Dim, of course: fair Shetland, where during the summer solstice the skies never quite get dark.

In June of 2009, Chris and Geoff spent a week birding the Shetland Islands in the company of Paul Harvey, once warden of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and now an Area Officer for Scottish Natural Heritage. After strolling amongst churring and groaning European Storm-Petrels in their breeding colony at an ancient Iron Age broch, getting dive-bombed by Bonxies (Great Skuas) while approaching the magnificent seabird cliffs at Hermaness, and watching Arctic Terns fend off marauding Arctic Skuas (Parasitic Jaegers), they headed south to enjoy the Scottish Highlands while staying in Nethy Bridge, a town along the River Spey.

They'll share their experiences of Scottish birds, natural and cultural heritage, castles, whisky, and driving on the left side of the road. (* Tammie Nories are Atlantic Puffins, Tysties are Black Guillemots, and Mallimokes are Northern Fulmars.)

A REMINDER

Photo Opportunity

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has established a new website, Observe Your Preserve, at <http://observeyourpreserve.org/>. The site has information about all the preserves, their subdivision into ecosystem areas, all species of plants and animals known to occur on them, a blog, and education opportunities. Information continues to be added to the species pages, and the District especially needs photographs of the animals and plants. As a nature photographer, you could be of great assistance in populating the photo library. Any images that are posted on the website will show the name of the photographer.

If you are interested, please visit the website. There you can see the format of the information and get an idea of what images are needed. Even if there is already an image of the subject, the site allows for multiple images so don't hesitate to submit. Photos do not have to be taken in taken DuPage County. Here are the minimum specifications: maximum file size 100 MB; allowed extensions png, gif, jpg, jpeg; images must be larger than 300x300 pixels. Include the name of the subject (or subjects, if more than one species is featured) and your name in the title of the image. If you are interested in becoming an image contributor, please contact Marcy Rogge (mrogge@dupageforest.com) for further information.

The District is the host for our meetings and this is a great way to partner with them on this nature and photography opportunity.

Print Suppliers

Opportunities arise where a photographer needs a quality print - whether it's for a print competition, exhibition, or display in your home. If you've used a print supplier and are satisfied with the quality and cost of their services, would you be willing to share that information with other members of the Club? If so, please email Sue Gajda with the information at segnet@aol.com.

Info should include the name of the supplier, address and/or website, types of prints - 8x10, 11x14, canvas wrap, turnaround time, etc.

Sue will compile responses for a future issue of the FOCUS.

Save the Date

Annual Dinner
Mayslake Nature Study
and
Photography Club

Saturday, April 13, 2013

Holiday Inn - Willowbrook

Speaker: John Van Den Brandt

More details in upcoming issues of the FOCUS.

Sunday September 16 Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center

There are over 15,000 acres of nature preserves in Palos and the Little Red Schoolhouse is one of their gems. Which also makes it a great place to spend the morning. With three miles of hiking trails that traverse the rolling glacial highlands of oak wood and prairie, The Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center in Willow Springs has lots of great photographic opportunities.

The Nature Center also overlooks the Long John Slough and if 3 miles of hiking are not enough for you, the Center connects with a longer Multi-Use Trail to see more of the 15,000 acres.

Come join your fellow Mayslakers for a visit to this great location. For more information, and to say you are coming, email Gail at: gachastain@hotmail.com

4th Monday Outing September 24 - Cantigny Park

There is always something blooming at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, so let's take advantage of it. Spend the morning with your fellow Mayslaker to enjoy and photograph the beauty of the park. Here is some information on the Park.

Stroll through the more than 29 acres with 22 individual gardens that encompass the Gardens at Cantigny and you understand why Cantigny's gardeners work so hard to maintain them. Here, you'll see what has been lost from our landscape. The prairies, grasses, trees, and ornamental flowers remind us of the beauty that nature offers every day.

And better yet, your Morton Arboretum membership is reciprocal!! So come join your fellow Mayslakers for a visit to this great location. For more information, and to say you are coming, email Gail at: gachastain@hotmail.com

A Unique Picnic

Members enjoyed a relaxing evening at the indoor picnic on August 20. The food was delicious and plentiful. The entertainment was unique - a "Something Unique" slideshow featuring images from several members. Thank you to the following creative and talented members who submitted images:

Bill Dixon
Chuck Peterson
Dennis Walz
Diane Hamernik
Fran Piepenbrink
Gail Chastain
Jack Shouba
Janice Henry
John Janunas
Karin Grunow
Marcia Nye
Noriko Buckles
Pei Tang
Sandra Karasek
Sheila Newenham
Steve Baginski
Steve Ornberg
Sue Gajda
Suzanne Zumstein

A special thank you to Gail Chastain for again putting her talent to work in creating the slideshow and selecting really appropriate music to complement the images.

Finally, congratulations to Marcia Nye and Chuck Peterson, who were winners of the special door prizes for those who submitted images for the slideshow.

Here's a photo of their prizes.



No, they didn't win new lenses. These are "unique" thermal mugs!

If you missed this opportunity to show your images outside of what we see at competitions, keep your eye on the FOCUS. We'll try to have more opportunities during the year.

CACCA - Previewing the New Year

CACCA competitions will be held monthly beginning in October and going through May 2013. CACCA will again host the Postcard competition on April 13, 2013 while the 'Salon' will be on March 16. There will also be several special monthly themed competitions open to individuals in member clubs. More information on all of those opportunities will be announced in future issues of the FOCUS.

Your Mayslake Board has made an important decision that will allow double the number of entries we are allowed in the monthly CACCA competitions. Although none of the entry or judging procedures for our local competitions have been changed for the new year, we have split our club membership into two groups, called Mayslake I and Mayslake II for CACCA competition purposes. This split allows us to have eight digital and eight print entries in every monthly CACCA competition instead of four.

The assignment of individuals into groups for CACCA purposes is somewhat complicated because of the different categories we use compared to the CACCA categories. Anyone who competes here in our A category in either digital or print will be in CACCA Mayslake I as will those who compete here in both events at level B. Anyone who competes here in our Digital category C will be in CACCA Mayslake II. Some of our members compete in two different Mayslake levels for digital and print. In general, those who are in one A and one B category here will go into Mayslake I while those who are in category B and C will go into Mayslake II. Those who did not compete here last year will be in Mayslake II. Seems a bit messy; however, before the first CACCA competition in October, each individual that entered any of our local competitions last year will receive an email telling them what CACCA level they will compete in this year, if their image (s) receive an HM or an AW in our Mayslake competitions.

Finally, several of our members last year wanted to enter images in a category that we as a club don't compete in, the category called Creative Digital in CACCA jargon. This allows for lots of creativity/compositing either in camera and/or in the computer thereafter. These competitions are in November, January and March. If you want to compete, contact CACCA Rep. Chuck Klingsporn by email, northrockies@aol.com, for details.

More Later.



Peck Farm Geneva, Illinois

It was a wonderful cool day and 17 Mayslakers took great advantage of it, while enjoying Peck Farm in Geneva. With over 395 acres of prairie, lakes, wildlife, gardens and butterflies, there was something for everyone. Many Mayslakers also participated in the set ups available for "Shooting Thru Glass". Then after spending a few hours wandering the grounds, most everyone ended their trip with the Butterfly Gardens.

The Photo Challenge for this outing was "Leading Lines" and as you will see from their images, there were a lot of ways to accomplish that Challenge. The Nature Challenge, was to identify the butterflies in the garden!

It was another trip of great photographic fun ending with a wonderful breakfast/lunch at Apple Villa restaurant. Be sure to visit the Mayslake Website to see the images from the Outing.



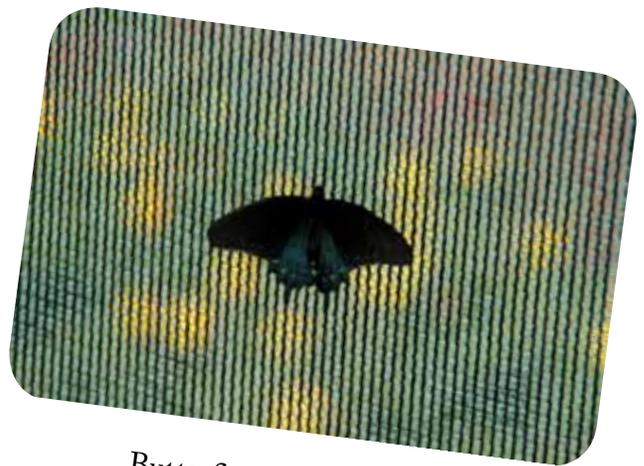
Lake at Peck Farm
Bill Pehrson



Pipeline Swallowtail Butterfly
Vic Butler



Leading Lines
Mary Mehl



Butterfly with Marigolds
Diane Hamernik

Belmont Prairie August 27, 2012



Thistle
Sue Gajda

The (welcomed) rain the night and/or the heat of the summer, may have discouraged a few, but certainly not all, from the joining in on the Mayslake's visit to Belmont Prairie in Downers Grove.

Belmont Prairie may be only 10 acres, but it still is an important prairie in IL, and especially for DuPage. Naturalists have found over 225 native plant species on this site and in 1979 it became the first Illinois nature preserve in DuPage County. The summer was hard on Belmont Prairie just as it has been all over the state, but there was still lots for our group to photograph.

The Photographic Challenge for this outing was a word challenge "Wild" and/or "Untamed" and the Nature Challenge was of course to find something to identify! To see what you missed, be sure to visit the Mayslake Website to see the images when they are posted and take note of the Challenges.



Wild Aliens
Mary Mehl



Compass Plant
Gail Chastain

In the last Lightroom column, I showed you how to use some of the tools located just below the Histogram in Develop's right panel, and began an explanation of the Basic panel. In this column, I'll continue with the Basic panel.

Tone Adjustment

Figure 1 shows the right side of the Develop module. The Basic panel is open and consists of three sections. Uppermost is the White Balance section which was discussed in the last column. In the middle is the Tone Adjustment section and at the bottom is the Presence section, both of which will be discussed in this column.

There are six sliders in the Tone Adjustment section. Notice that '0' is not the default position of all the sliders. The default position for Brightness is +50, and for Contrast it is +25. To get a 'feel' for how each slider changes the histogram, select each in turn and move it right and left while observing how the histogram changes. You'll see that each slider changes the histogram in its own unique way. For example, moving the Exposure slider left pretty much moves the entire histogram in that direction. The Recovery slider, however, affects just the right side of the histogram, which moves in a direction opposite to that of the slider. It is an especially effective tool for correcting highlight clipping, while having much less effect on the rest of the histogram than would be the case if you used the Exposure slider.

The Black and Fill Light sliders combine to provide the same functionality at the shadow side of the histogram. The Blacks slider moves the entire histogram while the effect of Fill Light is constrained to the left side of the histogram.

In addition, notice that highlight clipping shows on the image in red, while shadow clipping appears in blue. The Exposure, Recovery and Black sliders have an extra built-in feature.



Figure 1 shows the Basic panel. Below the open Basic panel are the other Develop module panels which supplement the image-optimization work begun in the Basic panel.

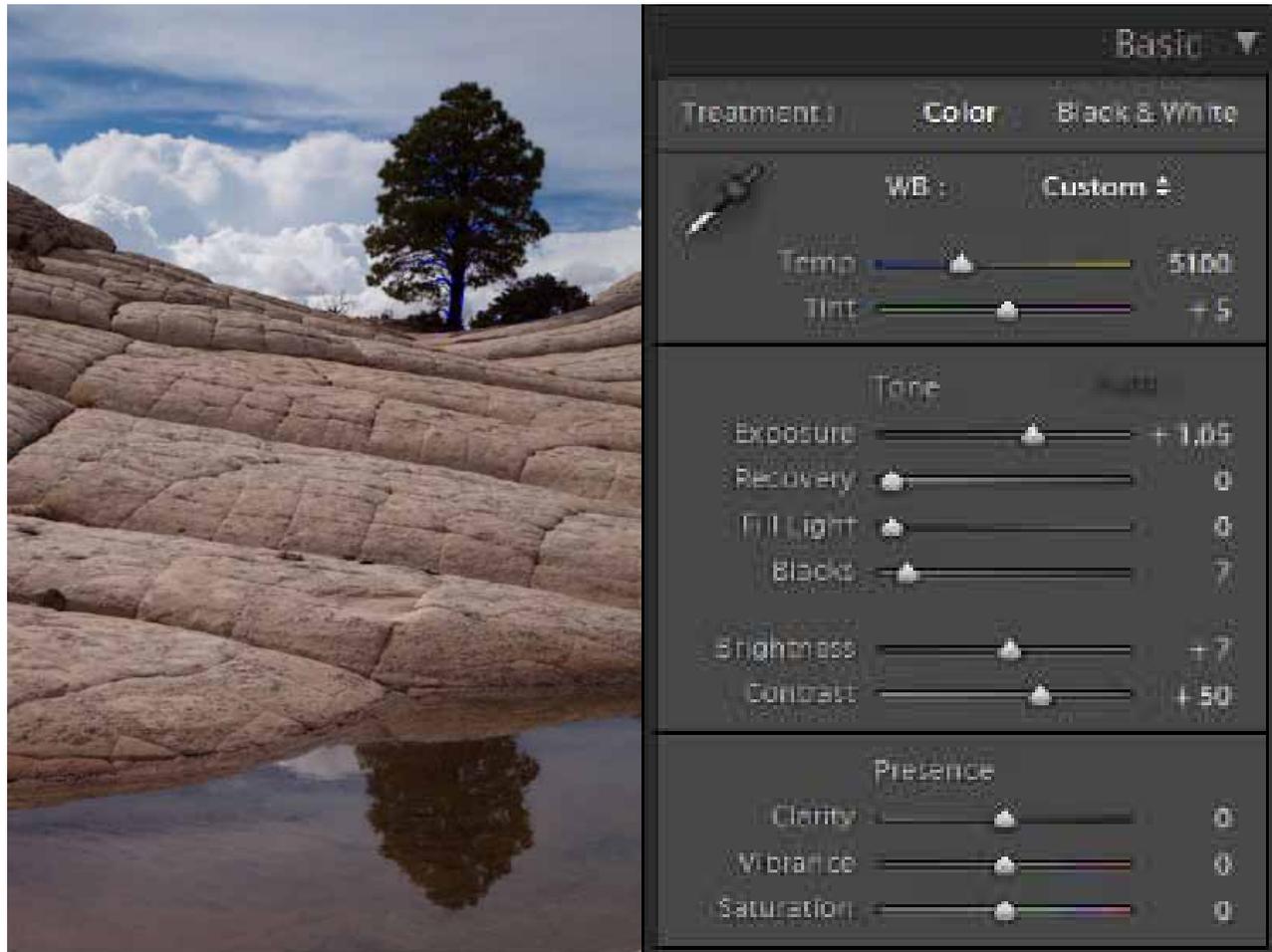


Figure 2 shows the result of applying the Auto Tone settings to the Brain Rock image.

When using these three, holding down the <Alt> opens a Threshold preview mode. In the case of Exposure and Recovery the screen is initially black, whereas for Black it is white. In all three cases, clipping is indicated when you start to see image through the threshold screen. This feature can be a big help since one is often adjusting sliders to the point where clipping just begins. The bottom line is that each slider has its own unique way of 'interpreting' the RAW image and their combination provides an infinite number of alternatives.

The 'Auto' correction button just above the Exposure slider gives one a basic interpretation of the RAW file. Click on the Auto button, **Figure 2** is the result. Your objective is to produce a superior result. Make a mental note of the result¹, then go to the top of the History panel which is in the left panel. Click on 'Temperature', which is second from the top just under 'Auto Tone'; this moves you back one step to **Figure 3**.

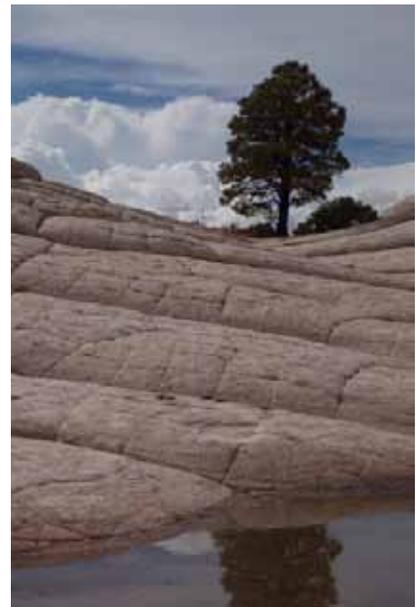


Figure 3 shows the Brain Rock when you use History to return to the state just after the White Balance tool has been set on the location of brightest cloud.

¹ Alternatively you can create a Snapshot of the result which you can later compare with your 'creative' result.



Figure 4 shows the Brain Rock image with the six Tone sliders adjusted manually to produce an optimum result.

Next adjust the six Tone sliders to produce the best result possible, consistent with the objectives noted above. **Figure 4** shows one possible result which is superior to either **Figure 3** or **Figure 2**.

Presence

Presence is the lowermost section of the Tone Adjustments panel. The first two controls, Clarity and Vibrance, are comparatively new to Photoshop (and Lightroom). Saturation on the other hand has been around forever, and it's probably the tool most overused by rookie image optimizers. I call this the Velvia syndrome. If you're a former film shooter you're probably familiar with Fuji Velvia. Many of us preferred this film because of the very saturated colors it produced. Having loved Velvia, it's hard to resist being overly aggressive with the Saturation slider. The process is so simple, and so deadly to the final result!

Overuse of the Saturation slider is one part of the problem; the way it functions is another part of the problem. Moving the Saturation slider to the right increases the saturation of **all** the colors in the image without regard to how saturated they were to begin with. Vibrance works differently: it increases saturation of least saturated colors most, while at the same time increasing saturation of the most saturated colors least. As a consequence the tool has less of a tendency to make the image appear radioactive!



Figure 5 shows the Brain Rock image and the Basic panel following the application of all the Basic panel adjustments.

Clarity is the newest of these tools. Moving Clarity to the right increases mid-tone contrast which can make a big difference to images since it (like sharpening) attracts the viewer's eye. For most images this is the desired alternative. However, for portrait images, positive Clarity is a bad idea because faces are mid-tone objects, and one certainly does not want to draw attention to facial blemishes! With portraits, use of negative Clarity is the appropriate technique.



Figure 6 is a family of loons with week-old chicks.

Figure 5 show the result of applying the Presence sliders to the Brain Rock image from the White Pocket.

Figure 6 is a second image that will help to further illustrate features of the Basic panel. This family of loons were photographed near our summer home in northern Ontario. The chicks are less than week old. The starting point is the White Balance, which in this case was set on the whitest part of the loon nearest the camera. The result was a Temp of 5200 and a Tint of +4. Next came the

Tone Adjustments. There is considerable shadow clipping on the adult birds, but reducing the Blacks from 5 to 1 eliminates the problem. Moving up the Fill Light setting shifts the lower portion of the histogram to the right and assures better detail in the darkest portions of the adult birds. Similarly, increasing the Recovery assures better detail in the highlights. Once again substantial Clarity and Vibrance settings were used. **Figure 7** shows the Basic panel results for the Loon family image.



Figure 7 shows the Loon Family image along with the final Basic panel adjustments.



Figure 8: The door to one of the DeGrazia Museum galleries decorated with Ted's painted beer can creations. The shot was made late morning.

The final demo image (**Figure 8**) using the Basic panel was shot at the DeGrazia museum in Tucson. Ted DeGrazia was a well-known artist in the Tucson area who in the mid-20th century specialized in native Indian subjects and techniques. He was a painter, sculptor and lithographer. The museum covers about 10 acres and has numerous adobe buildings which serve as galleries for his and his student's work.

The late morning sun made the sky and building lighter than desired, while at the same time creating excessive shadow just inside the door of the gallery building. The initial image showed some clipping in both the highlights and shadows. The image has nothing in it to help setting the White Balance, so no adjustment was attempted.

The first step was to adjust the Exposure and Fill Light sliders to eliminate the clipping (**Figure 9**).

The second issue was the excessive shadow inside the door. The Recovery slider was used to reduce the shadow and give more light to the interior of this museum gallery.



Figure 9: The Exposure and Fill Light have been adjusted to eliminate the highlight and shadow clipping.



Figure 10: The Recovery has been increased to improve the detail inside the door, and the Exposure and Fill Light have been slightly tweaked.

The final step with this Basic panel was to add the Presence adjustments. Once again this was done with changes only to the Clarity and Vibrance sliders. The final steps were a Clarity setting of +71 which does a lot to bring out detail in the door and the artwork that's attached to the door frame. The Vibrance was bumped up to +31; it added saturation to the sky and delivered a superior complement to the orange-brown of the building. **Figure 10** shows the result.

In the next column, I'll show you how to use the Tone Curve panel which is just below the Basic panel on the right side of the Develop module.