Los Gatos - Saratoga Camera Club Newsletter

Vol. 30 Issue 7 July 2008

2008 Calendar

July

7 Competition:	Color and Nature (Slides/Digital/Prints)
21 Program:	Natural Light Portraiture presented by Claudia Peterson

August

2 Competition	Color and PJ (slides/digital/prints) Travel (Slides and Digital Images) Monochrome(prints)
18	NO Meeting/Program

© Claudia Peterson

Program Meeting

Natural Light Portraiture

July 21, 2008

Presented by Claudia Peterson

Claudia Peterson, Portrait of the Year Winner at Photographic Society of America, will give a presentation on how she does Natural Light Portraiture. She has won numerous awards for her Portraits and has been a Presenter at Yuerba Buena Chapter Day and Fotoclave on this subject.

Claudia will discuss lighting, lens choice, shooting tips, how to approach potential models, how to work with them, and how to get the best images from them. The program will include a slideshow and live demonstration, using a model from the audience.

In the past, Claudia has been a presenter and a judge at our club and should be a familiar face to many of our members. Let's all turn out to support her in this interesting program.

Quote of the month:

The photographer's eye is perpetually evaluating. A photographer can bring coincidence of line simply by moving his head a fraction of a millimeter... He composes a picture in very nearly the same amount of time it takes to click the shutter - at the speed of a reflex action.

Henri Cartier-Bresson

LGSCC Member Show

Captured Moments

Julie Kitzenberger, Photographer

at the Aegis Gallery of Fine Art
Show runs from July 29 through August 24, 2008

Reception:
Saturday evening, August 2, 2008
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Aegis Gallery of Fine Art
www.Aegisgallery.com
14531 Big Basin Way at 4th Street
Saratoga, CA 95070
408.867.0171

Gallery hours:
Sun, Tu, Wed: 12 – 7 PM
Th, Fri, Sat: 12 – 9 PM
Closed Mondays

Julie has positioned herself locally as an emerging fine art landscape, travel, and event photographer.

Applying talents, experience and learnings from writing, acting, and music, Julie is exploring through photography her desire to capture the moment, recreate the experience, tell the story. Julie believes the tired and overused vacation phrase, "Wish you were here," has only become so because it still expresses one of the most fundamental human desires: to share a peak experience or moment with someone who couldn't be there.

©Julie Kitzenberger

From a technical standpoint, Julie invites viewers to identify which of her images have been created with film versus digital capture and then challenges them to explain why that matters to the success of an image.

The Ethics of Photographing Flora and Fauna[1]
By Etta Parker

Why do we want to take pictures of nature subjects? It is probably because we love nature's beauty, we love to be in the outdoors, and we know that our mere existence depends on our living in harmony with nature. It is also a way to reconnect to something with which most humans have lost touch. Peaceful, wild, untamed, not constructed or built, this is nature in its purest

[1] Reprinted from Yahoo Groups - PhotoEditors

beauty. So as photographers we want to capture that beauty. But when we set out to photograph the beauty that nature provides us, it is important that we respect our subjects and their environment.

Always use a blind for birds and larger animals. It doesn't have to be a fancy store bought expensive one. Anything that hides us is a blind. I designed and built my own muskrat house floating blind for working in the marsh.

I used two large pieces of Styrofoam and built a wooden frame on top and wired it together. I then erected four pcv piping criss - crossing from the corner ends. I put some camaflage material over the whole thing, tied the corners and ends down. I cut out a hole in the middle of the floor so that I could, if necessary paddle with my feet or even a paddle, if the wind carried me too far out on the pond. It worked great until one day I tried to get in it and I was greeted by a bad mannered muskrat that had taken up residency. Its personality did not change for the better and I finally let him/her have the thing for the rest of the season.

When I took up the blind there were 16 yellow spotted salamanders that had also taken up residency under the blind, so the main purpose of it that summer was to provide shelter for many animals. The photographer did not get that much use out of it.

I then bought an old beat up kayak and patched it up and camaflaged it by painting it brown and broke it up with painted green oak leaf pattern. A car can make an excellent blind for roadside wildlife. Just take a piece of camaflage material and tape it with duct tape to the top of the window and bottom, leaving a hole in it to shoot through.

Set up the blind before you really want to photograph your subject so they can get used to it being there and realize that it will do them no harm. Leave a can, bottle, in the hole where your lens will be sticking out, so they will get used to this shiny object. If possible have an extra person who can enter the blind and then leave, especially when photographing birds. Most birds can't count so they will think everyone has gone.

Be very careful not to set up the blind during hatching times for birds or in the case of mammals at birthing times. This may require some research on your part to know when this is taking place with the particular subject you are interested in photographing.

If we set up a blind for example for a bird's nest and the adult bird leaves and doesn't return within 20 to 30 minutes, we should move out of the area quickly. Start over again and move farther back and move up very slowly over a period of days/weeks.

If the adult bird is kept off the nest too long the eggs will cook in the hot sun, or cool off too much if it is a cold day. This is especially true for the Piping Plover who builds its nest on an open beach, or its cousin, the Killdeer, who builds its nest in an open field, such as a blueberry field, or pasture. I remember one year a killdeer built a nest right next to third base on a ball field in Newfoundland. Playing was suspended until the young fledged. Hats off to the Newfoundlanders.

Refrain from picking up chicks. Many times I have been called about chicks being picked up and have gone to take them back to where they were found so that the parents could find them. Children especially do this often, thinking that the young have been abandoned, but they seldom are. At a certain age the parents will just go further from them, but always come back. Picking up chicks and touching young mammals causes our scent to be on them and this can attract predators, and in some cases it could cause the young to be abandoned by the parents.

There is a strong urge to walk up to birds on nests, especially when they are easy to reach such as the Piping Plover and it's cousin, the Killdeer. I hear people say "oh I walked right up to it and it had a right fit the first time, but when I went back the next week it didn't pay any attention to me so it was used to me." Well the second or third time the nest is approached and the bird stays on the nest usually means that the bird is more attached to its nest but is actually just as terrified at our presence as it was the first time. If the bird's heartbeat were to be monitored, it probably would be beating very fast from fear. When a bird first builds its nest and is disturbed it might just abandon the nest and start somewhere else because it is not very attached to the nest yet. However, once it becomes attached to the nest it will not leave it. This is especially true when the hatchings are about to or have just arrived and hopefully we wouldn't be there hassling it. If you see a bird pulling the "broken wing act" then it is really

perturbed so don't take a picture but get out of the area quickly. I am not saying that over a period of time that the bird/animal would not get used to human presence, but it would take a long time on our part.

When a chick is hatching refrain from removing any part of the egg because it is taking too long and we want to get a good shot and get home. It is important that the chick has the struggle and the nutrients from the egg as it is hatching. Would it surprise you to learn that the type of photography that causes the most disturbance is MACRO photography?

We get up before sunrise to be at our favorite spot when the sun rises for the right light to photograph the flower that is in bloom at that time.

Then we tramp around the flower finding the best angle, set up our tripod, and then maybe we need to set up a wind/sun tent. As if this tramping around the flower hasn't done enough damage, we then have to lay on the ground to be at the right height for our subject. By now we have succeeded in squashing down everything around the subject.

Some photographers like to take their subject (flower/mushroom) exactly the way they find it, sticks, grass and all. However, most of us like to do a little gardening and clean the subject up and clear off offensive things on and around it. Thereby hangs a tale: My first trip with a couple of older members of the Photographic Guild almost proved to be my last. One of them found a beautiful bracket fungi and they all knelt down to look at it. I heard the word cleaning it up so I knelt down and saw some twigs and water on top of the thing. Being rather quick when I was younger I thought to myself " I'll clean that up for them" and proceeded to blow the twigs off the top, taking with it all the water as well. I heard a few groans and thought their knees must be hurting as they were much older than me. I quickly learned that they really wanted that water on top of the mushroom as it made the picture. They were digging out their tweezers to pick off the short pieces of twigs. OOPS!

The only way not to do any damage at all would be to stay home. So, we should just use our common sense and try and put things back as much as we can the way it was when we first got there.

We should refrain from picking flowers, digging them up, or cutting off a twig or stem that is in our way. Instead carefully tie the offending things back with a piece of string (something that won't cut into the stem or twig) and when we finish our shot then carefully untie them so they can return to their original position.

I will relate a funny story so that you know that I learned what little I know about the environment over the years of making many mistakes. My dear late friend, Mary Primrose, and I were photographing mushrooms at Keji National Park one rather dark afternoon. Mary, being an excellent flower and fungi photographer could not get the right light on this mushroom no matter how hard she tried. Now we both erred on the side of doing nothing to harm the environment, Mary more so than I at that time. But what an unusual mushroom we found. It was too much for Mary so we dug it up and were on our way out the path to find a spot where we could get better lighting, when who do we meet walking along the path with the mushroom in hand but a group of members from the Photographic Guild who were on a field trip. Well we never heard the last of that one.

(Editor's Note: the rest of the article will be in next month's newsletter)

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www.losgatos-saratogacameraclub.org

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