

Meeting Minutes

Date: August 20, 2014

By: Jean Davids, Secretary Monticello Camera Club

We had 17 members and 1 guest, John Pennoyer, for a total of 18 attending the meeting.

We reviewed assignments that were submitted by 4 people. Thanks everyone who submitted them. Jerrie Ahrens had two great images of clearwing moths, also commonly referred to as hummingbird moths.

John Pennoyer, <http://www.impressionsofnature.com>, gave a presentation on composition. He's a wildlife and nature photographer who also teaches at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. What follows is my best attempt to take notes on his presentation. You will have to visit his website to view his great images.

Definition of composition from the dictionary or Wikipedia would be 'the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients'. His definition of composition would be 'central focus, supporting interest, limit negative space, position for eye pleasing image.

Rule (more of a guideline) of thirds - The intersecting points are called "power points". He cautions on centering horizontally or vertically. Some cameras have a grid view that you can use for your viewfinder that can be helpful for this.

Enhancing

- Leading lines like shoreline, railroad tracks, etc that lead you into the photo.
- Use Framing techniques like branches. Careful to not overdue as can also be distracting.
- Strong foreground.
- Elements should lead to the background.
- Limit negative space (not interesting), black space and boring sky.
- Keep entire frame interesting (central subject, supporting interest).
- Always try for best composition 'in camera'.
- If necessary, crop in post processing. This is more common with wildlife and action photos.
- Use 1/3 and 2/3 composition where 2/3 of the image holds the most interest. That is that people, animals, birds, etc share 2/3 of the space of your image.

When he shoots wildlife, he always shoots with center focus and crops afterward as needed.

When sky is more interesting, it should take up 2/3 of photo. If land is more interesting, it should.

Cautions

- Don't put shoreline or horizon in middle of frame (generally).
- Don't center subject
- Don't have people, animals, birds leaving the frame. Better to have entering.
- Don't have only small area of frame be of interest.

How to improve

- Look or move around to find what to capture. He does 95% search, 5% capture.
- Try for perspectives other than just eye level.
- Zoom in or out.
- Use horizontal or vertical images or both.
- Use different focal length lenses.

Note: good photography is a lot of work. Your vision is more important than your equipment.

Horizontal versus vertical - sometimes a photographer needs to recognize which is better. Learn to 'see it'.

Post processing for your composition - keep in mind that not all images must be 3x2 format. Some lend themselves more to panoramic format.

Breaking the rules

- Sometimes breaking the rules lends itself more to the best composition. Example he showed was a duck running across the water during takeoff where the splash of water was important too.
- If entering photo contests, quite often judges will downgrade your image if you break the rules so generally don't want to submit these for competition despite the quality of the image. His example of one he couldn't enter and win with was a spider web where the spider was centered in the web. It was important to have it all centered in the image to show the symmetry of the web and the spider within it.
- Regarding birds exiting the frame - showed a duck leaving the frame but the splash of his footprints was a very important part of the image.

Showed an image of lily pads where he had used a polarizer to enhance the view of the underwater stems. This demonstrated the use of leading lines.

Look for strong foreground to lead into background. Gives the image more 3 dimensional look.

His one and only big tip is to fill the frame with **INTEREST**.

You can see more of John Pennoyer's photography at www.impressionsofnature.com.

Our next assignment is long and/or multi-exposure photos. Ken Kvam will do a demonstration of Time Lapse Photography.