Nicole Green to Speak
At the March Meeting
Of SPS

Our speaker for the March 16th meeting will be Nicole Green.

Nicole is a native of Bowling Green, Ohio. She graduated with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in Art Education with a focus in 2-Dimensional studies from Bowling Green State University. She has been teaching for 3 years, instructing introductory drawing and painting classes, art foundations classes, and advanced drawing classes. She began taking photography classes during her third year of college, and was immediately hooked on photography. She is always looking for new and unlikely scenarios in everyday life, and uses that motivation in her photography.

Nicole currently lives in Leesburg, and teaches at Millbrook High School in Winchester.

The Magic of HDR

Club member Erik Zimmerman presented a workshop on HDR at the February meeting. HDR, which stands for High Dynamic Range, is a process by which several bracketed exposures of the same scene are combined in a software program, allowing you to capture the full range of color and detail.

Erik took us through the entire process, beginning with taking a series of bracketed photos while the camera is mounted on a tripod. He explained the importance of keeping the same aperture throughout the series of shots. The different exposures are then imported into a computer program, such as Adobe Photoshop or Photomatix Pro, among others. After the computer has generated a composite of the exposures, the image can be adjusted to your liking. Some HDR images are very natural looking, while other photographers prefer a look that is surreal. Thank you, Erik, for a very informative and motivating workshop.

Further information on HDR can be found at the following websites.

Adobe Photoshop, ~$700.00, www.adobe.com

Photomatix Pro, ~$100.00, www.hdrsoft.com

Examples of HDR can be found at
http://www.hdrsoft.com/examples.html

Calendar of Events for 2009

DATE	TOPIC
JANUARY 19	OPEN
FEBRUARY 16	FOOD AND DRINK
MARCH 16	OPEN
APRIL 20	THREE
MAY 18	OPEN
JUNE 15	ABSTRACT
JULY 20	OPEN, NO TIME LIMIT
AUGUST 17	SEEN BETTER DAYS
SEPTEMBER 22	OPEN
OCTOBER 19	WATER

NOVEMBER BANQUET, TO BE DETERMINED, END OF YEAR COMPETITION

DECEMBER SOCIAL, TO BE DETERMINED, NO COMPETITION

7:00—Open doors and meeting room set-up

7:00-7:15—Register images for competition

7:15-7:30—Judging

7:30—Start program, business meeting,

 and announce results

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month

American Red Cross

561 Fortress Drive

Winchester, Virginia 22603

Rules for Monthly Competitions

Photographs must be signed in by 7:15. Entries will not be permitted after that time. Photos must be matted or mounted, and frames and glass covers are not allowed. The submissions must be taken within the last two years, except for the June competition when there is no time limit. You may enter 2 images per division in which you belong.

As a reminder, Class A is for the advanced photographer, Class B is for the intermediate photographer, and Class C is for the novice photographer.

News and Notes

Judges Needed—Please contact Mike Potter to sign up for judging. If you have never judged before, Mike will be sure to put you with an experienced judge who will show you the ropes.

Judging schedule for 2009

Month	Main Judge	Assistants	Assistants	Topic
Jan	Mike Potter	Cynthia Winter		Open
Feb	Pete Meeks	John Zimet	Charley Lillis	Food and Drink
Mar	Bill Meeker	Ellen Zimmerman	Earl Cockerham	Open
Apr	Karl Mueller	Tanya Barton	Sandra Ashton	Three
May		Kristin Zimet	Karen Swortzel	Open
Jun	Leo Schweiger	Chet Lewandowski	Carl Bower	Abstract
Jul		Kyle Wallace	Sandi Fanning	Open (no time limit)
Aug				Seen Better Days
Sep		Bob Peak	Kay Hallett	Open
Oct		Nicki Philpot		Water

Cumberland Valley Photographic Salon—Now through March 22.

Now in its 76th year, this popular juried exhibition displays the work of amateur and professional photographers from Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Out of 291 entries, 56 prints and 1 slide were accepted. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to vote for their favorite photograph. The exhibition is located at the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, in Hagerstown, Md.

Photography Class Offering—March 18 through April 15

Joe Alderman and Leo Schweiger will be teaching a class through Shenandoah University's Center for Lifelong Learning. This class, "Successful Pictures from Your Digital Camera", will be held at Cooley Hall, Room 106, from 6-8 pm on Wednesday evenings. Please call Jo Miller at 665-5442 for more information.

Websites of Interest

Equipment and Supplies

www.nikonusa.com	Nikon news and equipment
www.usacanon.com	Canon news and equipment
www.wacom.com	Wacom tablets and pens
www.bhphotovideo.com	Online retail equipment
www.adorama.com	Online retail equipment
www.crumplerbags.com	Camera bags
www.visibledust.com	Sensor cleaning supplies
www.expodisc.com	White balance tools

Software

www.niksoftware.com	www.photomatix.com
www.adobe.com	www.topazlabs.com
www.alienskin.com	http://www.picnik.com/

Services

www.flickr.com	Photo sharing
www.istockphoto.com	Stock photography
www.mpix.com	Photographic and press products
www.BorrowLenses.com	Equipment rental
www.fotolia.com	Stock images
www.LC-tech.com	Photorecovery for digital media
www.moo.com	Business cards, mini cards, etc.
www.PerfectPosters.com	Large digital prints

Blogs, Training, and Tutorials

|	
www.photoshopuser.com	www.kelbytraining.com
www.planetphotoshop.com	www.digitalphotoacademy.com
www.photoshopseminars.com	www.scottkelby.com/blog/
http://davecross.blogspot.com/	http://www.moosenewsblog.com/

Winning Images
Color Class A

First Place
Cotton Candy
John Zimet

Second Place
Harvest Time
Chet Lewandowski
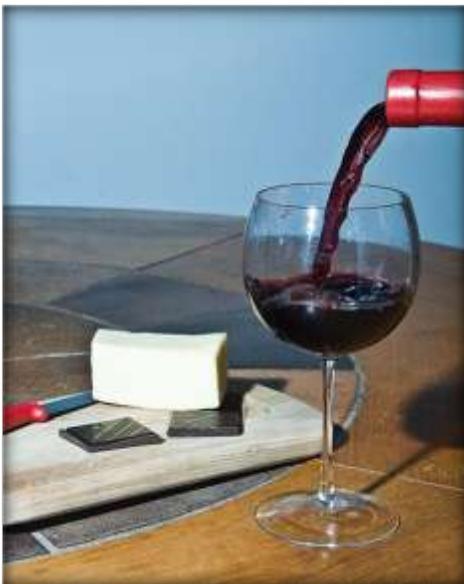
Third Place
Comfort Food
John Monroe

Image Not Available
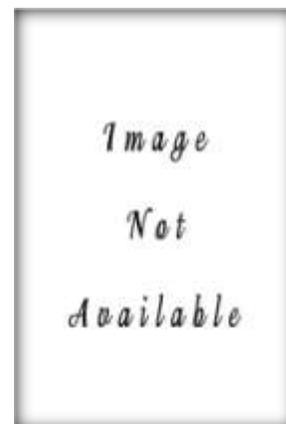
Honorable Mention
Of the Vine
John Little

Winning Images
Monochrome Class A

First Place
Baked Bread
John Monroe

Second Place
Good to the Last Drop
John Zimet

Winning Images
Color Class B

First Place
Side Dishes
Ellen Zimmerman

Second Place
Ice Cream
Kristin Zimet

Third Place
Corn
Cynthia Winter

Honorable Mention
Make Mine a Double
Cynthia Winter

Winning Images
Monochrome Class B

First Place
Veggie Vendor
Chet Lewandowski

Second Place
Morning Brew
Cynthia Winter

Third Place
Stylish Coffee
Ellen Zimmerman

Honorable Mention
Cantaloupe
Kristin Zimet

Winning Images
Color Class C
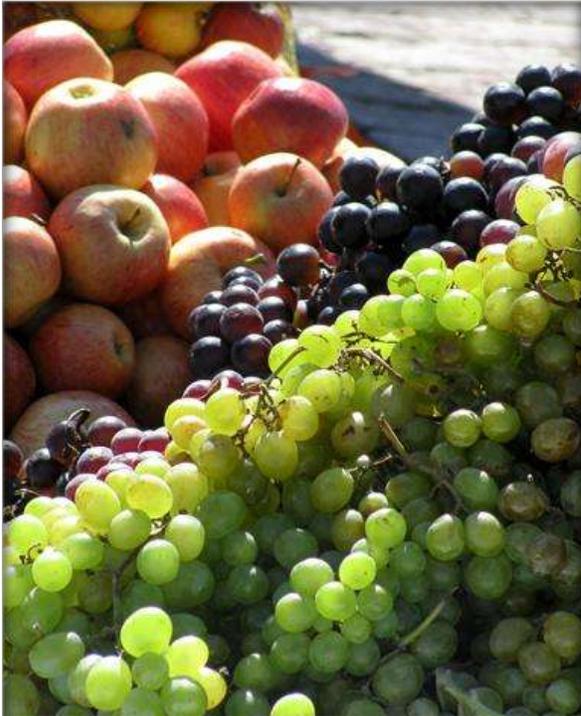
First Place
Fruit…Fruit for Sale
Gwen Monroe

Second Place
Mint Tea, Please
Gwen Monroe

Third Place
Hot Chocolate Cold AM
Sandra Ashton

Winning Images
Monochrome Class C

First Place
Irish Pub Drinks
Tanya Barton

Second Place
Bob
Earl Cockerham

Winning Images
Enhanced

First Place
Hot Sauce
John Zimet
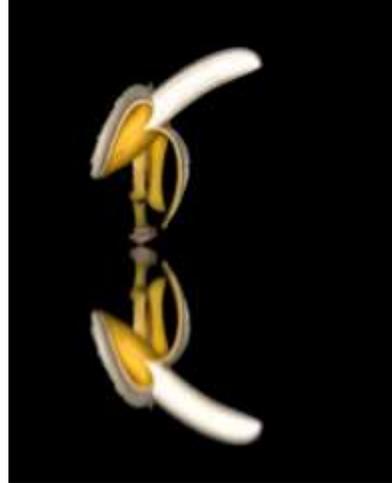
Second Place
Bananas
Cynthia Winter

Third Place
Plum Good
Earl Cockerham
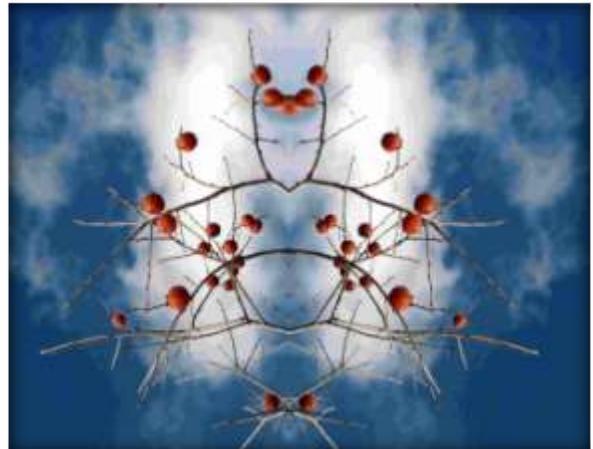
Honorable Mention
Persimmon
Earl Cockerham

Club Officers

President, John Monroe
Phone (540) 877-2725
JohnMonroe@hughes.net

1st Vice President, Ellen Zimmerman
Phone (540) 722-4914
ez@zimm.com

2nd Vice President, Pete Meeks
Phone (540) 955-2607
rbmpete@wildblue.net

Treasurer, Tanya Barton
Phone (540) 955-9135
tb@tanyabarton.com

Public Relations & Head Judge, Mike Potter
Phone (540) 667-0964
Mike_debbie@comcast.net

Newsletter, Cynthia Winter
Phone (540) 955-9588
clcwinter@hotmail.com, cwinter@visuallink.com

Webmaster, Erik Zimmerman
Phone (540) 888-0015
erik@whitespiderdesign.com

Check out the Meadowlark 2009 Nature Photography Expo, March 7-8 in Vienna. The hours are Saturday 9-4:30 and Sunday 10-4:30. This is a fantastic chance to photograph hawks and owls up close. There are lectures and free camera sensor cleaning. Wil Hershberger will be one of the lecturers, speaking on "Ten Steps to Better Macro Photography." See their website, www.meadowlardphotoexpo.org, for more details.

If you have any announcements that you would like to have included in the newsletter, please sent them to cwinter@visuallink.com.

John and Gwen Monroe recently attended a seminar in Raleigh, NC, held by renowned photographer and author John Shaw. Here are their notes from the classes.

Notes from the John Shaw Seminar - 7 Feb, 2009 – Raleigh, NC
by
Gwen and John Monroe

Gwen and I attended a photography seminar given by John Shaw recently and the following has been gleaned from a combination of Gwen's copious notes and my failing memory. All ideas are those of John Shaw and I give him full credit. John offered many great photo tips along with sample images to illustrate his points. Here are a few things that struck an accord with us.

John Shaw is adamant about setting up your shots before pushing the button and wants you to ask: "What is it that I like about the scene and what must I do to capture the essence of the moment and only that part of the scene"? Then ask: Is this a good subject? Is this a good composition? Is this good light? Are you positive?

He suggests that you go out shooting with 'photographers' and not 'birders'. Birders like to spot their subject, record it in their lists, and move on. Photographers need to have time to explore and find the best subjects and perspectives. And that takes time. We are all in too much of a hurry to get the shot.

The only filter you need today with digital cameras is the polarizer. It makes a blue sky more vivid; it makes leaves less shiny, and tends to give an image more saturation. Be sure not to use too much polarization on the sky or it will look like midnight. All other traditional filters can be accomplished with post processing.

"First, you must see the light on your subject". You are recording the light on the subject – not the subject itself. The best light is early in the morning and late afternoon.

The point of photography is to control the emotional response of the viewer.

If you can produce one great shot a day, you are a successful photographer.

Shoot animals and kids from their eye level. Get down on the ground or at least sit or kneel down.

Color can be warm (more yellow) or cool (more blue). Most people prefer warm over cool.

At crowded locations like Yellowstone, you will have fewer people around if you shoot at meal times. John claims that not many people will miss a meal just to get a picture so you are more likely to have some peace and quiet at mealtimes. He suggests talking about food to subconsciously get others to begin thinking about eating (and leaving).

Front Light: flat, no definition, not good for landscapes or close ups. It is good for birds and mammals because no part of the animal is in shadow.

Side Light: watch out for shadows. This is great for landscapes. Shadows make the rest of the image look sharper (if that's your intent). You need shadows to produce texture in snow and sand so try not to shoot during the middle of the day.

Backlight: separates, delineates, and shows the shape and form of your subject. It 'halos' objects and gives them a majestic look.

Soft Overhead Light: great for close-ups because it shows detail. Overcast days are perfect for flowers.

Hard Light: a high-contrast scene in bright sunlight during mid day simply can't be captured – wait until later in the day or for another day.

Watch out for 'merges'. This can be foreground and background colors that are too close in tone so that the colors merge and the subject disappears. It can also be objects in the image that touch one another such as the branch that pops out of your subject's head.

Don't allow things to barely touch – either separate them or overlap them enough so it doesn't look like it was a mistake. If lines are coming together at the edge of the image, crop so that they do not merge.

With all photography you need to **FAST**

F – Focus   Is my subject in focus? Is my foreground in focus? Do I want the background in focus?
A – Aperture   Is my aperture going to produce the desired depth-of-field?
S – Shutter   Will this shutter speed yield the blurring or crispness I desire?
T – Think   Think about everything: ISO, File Format, Flash, Composition, Contrast, etc.

Cropping: leave sufficient room surrounding the subject to be able to crop later. Don't get into the situation where you are forced to crop out something of interest just to get the required form factor for printing. Don't try to capture everything with one picture – look for the "picture within the picture" instead.

Metering: exposure is the single biggest problem everyone has. Once a meter is calibrated any subject you meter will have a tone (not necessarily the color) equivalent to a gray card. Always ask the question "Is the metered object lighter or darker than a gray card"? If it is lighter, you have to add some light. If darker, you have to remove some light. This correction can be done in four ways. You can use the aperture setting, the shutter speed, the 'compensation' control, or the ISO to allow more or less light. If

metering snow or sand in bright sunlight add two (+2) stops. If metering a really dark or black object, subtract two (-2) stops. If the metered area is between the neutral gray and pure white or black, then use (+1) or (-1) instead. Practice this technique until it becomes habit. Go out and take a series of test shots one day when you are bored with life.

For early morning and late afternoon shooting the following guideline can be used. Meter on the brightest part of the sky and then add +1 stop of light. Make sure that your camera doesn't change the exposure you have just set when you re-compose the shot by either locking exposure or changing to a manual exposure setting.

For all situations, after metering and compensating as explained above, take a picture and look at the histogram. This is your very best indication of correct exposure. Looking at the LCD on the back of the camera will not give you good information about exposure – you must use the histogram.

The goal is to have the histogram's right-most edge very close to the right edge of the scale without clipping (having the right-most line on the edge). If your camera allows it, turn on the 'blinkies' where the display flashes when clipping occurs. Read your manual to see how to turn the 'blinkies' on.

With digital (and film too) we do not want to burn out the highlights. People are accustomed to not being able to see detail in the darker shadows but they want to always see detail in the brightest areas of any scene. This is why we want to have the histogram close to, but not touching the right edge. The right edge represents the highlights while the left edge represents the shadows.

File Formats: all digital cameras shoot in RAW (usually with either 12 or 14 bits of data). If you select a JPEG format (usually to save storage space or to avoid converting from RAW later) the camera will throw away from 4 to 6 bits of information while it stores the data on your flash card. Exactly which bits the camera decides to throw away is determined by the manufacturer (but not by you). How does it know which bits to throw away? IT DOES NOT KNOW – IT GUESSES!!! And very often, it guesses wrong. If you are not shooting in RAW on a regular basis, please try it with some test shots to see if it doesn't improve your final output.

f-Stops: the aperture, shutter speed, and ISO settings all work in the same fashion. With each change from one setting to the next, the amount of light striking the camera's sensor either doubles or is cut in half. As the ISO increases (100 to 200) the amount of light needed to expose correctly is reduced by one half. As the aperture setting changes from f2 to f2.8 to f4 to f5.6, etc. the amount of light needed to expose correctly increases by a factor of two (just the opposite of the ISO). And as the shutter speed changes from 1/60 to 1/125 to 1/250 the amount of light needed to expose correctly increases by a factor of two (just like the aperture). Since there are many 'correct' combinations of ISO, aperture, and shutter speed, you must determine what is the most important variable influencing the shot. If depth-of-field is critical, set your aperture first and then set the shutter speed. If the required shutter speed is not good, change the ISO until you can get the required shutter speed. If motion is the most important thing, set your shutter speed first and then the aperture. If the aperture yields a bad depth-of-field, change the ISO.

Digital White Balance: this determines if objects look as they should or have a color tint to them. See your camera manual for specifics on setting white balance. If shooting JPEG, always set the white balance before shooting. If shooting RAW, you can set the white balance after shooting during post processing.

Composition: John suggests that you wander around to find the best subject – don't shoot the first thing you see. Then he suggests hand holding the camera to find the best composition. Try both landscape and portrait. After determining composition, figure out what lens to use to get only what you want to include in the image. Preview the depth-of-field (think about your aperture). Only then should you set up your tripod and mount the camera.

Then, check for background and foreground distractions. Check the frame edges for hotspots (where a bright piece of the sky is showing). SIMPLIFY. Wait for the best natural light (normally earlier or later in the day than you would like to be out shooting but necessary to get an exceptional shot).

Compositional Choices:

- Vertical or Horizontal?

- Where to place the edge of the frame?

- Where do you put the subject within the frame?

- When do you trip the shutter?

Light: "Light is the very first and most important part of composition". "Every place on earth is beautiful at the right time of day". LIGHT IS THE DIFFERENCE.

Photo GRAPHICS: Critique your images upside down. By doing so, you will not be as distracted by the subject and will see the impact of color, contrast, lighting and composition.

Technique: "Good technique will overcome mediocre equipment any day". Learn how to hold your camera steady or use a tripod. If you are using a point-and-shoot, hold the camera out to see the LCD while you are framing the shot, but bring it in as close to your body as possible when tripping the shutter. Bring your elbows into your side to help steady the camera. For SLR cameras, use a body part (like your head) to help hold and steady the arm holding the camera to keep it from shaking.

Flash: use the lowest ISO you can. If possible hold the flash away from the camera to help prevent red-eye. Use flash fill to reduce shadows in harsh light. If using full flash (i.e., not using daylight to expose the sensor), the short duration of the flash will stop all motion.   It also allows the aperture to be stopped way down for greater depth-of-field. Check out 'Lighting 101' on the **strobist.com** website as an excellent source of information on using flash. An interesting note, if you position a flash unit too close to an insect, you can actually set it on fire – please don't do that.

Focusing: If you can't see clearly though the eyepiece, you will never get a sharp image. Most cameras have a diopter adjustment to correct the image to your eyes. Determine how to adjust it by reading your camera manual and then set it for your eyes (or glasses). John suggests that it might be easier to do the adjustment if you first remove the camera lens. I tried this but have not yet mastered the trick.

Simplifying Composition: John ended the session with several quotes to drive home the idea of simplifying your composition. "Compose to isolate, simplify and define and you will achieve balance and harmony".

- A good photograph is a <u>paragraph</u>

- A great photograph is a <u>sentence</u>

- An exceptional photograph is a <u>phrase</u>

So ask yourself what is it about a scene that you like? Then spend some time and effort in removing everything else from the viewfinder. Use different focal length lenses if possible or use your position to accomplish the task. Move forward or backward – move sideways or up or down. Just move! Not only will you end up with a better composition but you will get extra points from your family doctor for getting more exercise in your life.

Thank you John and Gwen for sharing your experiences.