



# F o c a l P o i n t

Date

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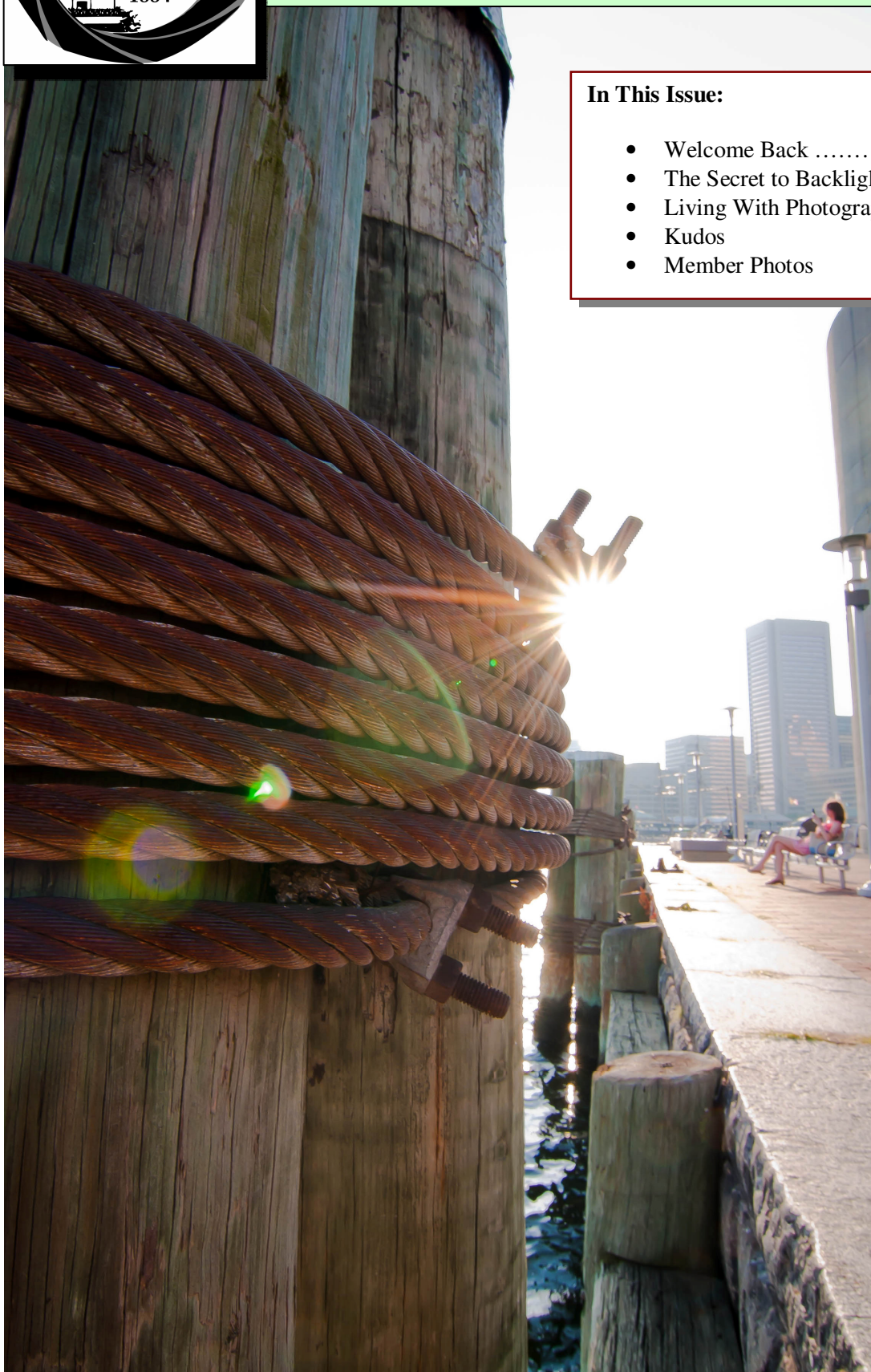


Photo by Bob Knill



# F o c a l P o i n t

## FROM YOUR EDITOR:

Will this ridiculously hot summer ever end?!?!? I don't know about you but, I didn't get out to take pictures as much as I wanted to this summer – it was too hot! The plastic parts of my camera melted and the metal parts became too hot to touch!

Seriously though, I want to welcome returning members and new members to the 2010/2011 season of the Baltimore Camera Club. New president, new outings and new opportunities to improve and/or learn new photography skills. To paraphrase our president's welcome back message: **Participate** in the club's offerings. It's cool!

Thanks to Steve Harmon, Bob Knill & Arthur Ransom for their contributions this month.

## BCC Gets Out





# F o c a l P o i n t

## President's Welcome Back Message

### The Ripple Effect

It started several years ago. Karen Messick became our club president and like the stone tossed into the pool of water, her energy and determination sent out ripples of change to other members and the club itself. Her selfless sacrifice of her time in volunteering to be our club president brought forth over her tenure the successful and respected camera club we are today.

Her enthusiasm and outgoing personality set into motion the ripples of energy that infused other selfless volunteers to accomplish much. We completed several Goucher College and Camera School workshops, built the Mentor Program, established the Digital Competition, Club Forum and Critique sites, updated our Constitution and Bylaws, tackled club liability issues, developed a new member package and had fun on many club sponsored day and extended weekend field outings. In addition, Michael Boardman, submitted the financial statement for this past year which he states was "probably our best year ever financially". Our club made a profit of \$6,888.00 through the work of Karen and the many volunteers who help organize the many successful workshops and outings that are our "money makers" (Club dues only pay for half of our yearly expenses). In addition, Karen was successful in passing her energy in a ripple effect to the many volunteers that are required each year to run the operation of the club under the many club committees that make our club run smoothly week to week.

We need our members to step forward and volunteer selflessly so that the ripple effect of the efforts of the Board and the Committee Chairs is continued by its membership. We currently have 64 individual events (contest, programs, outings and workshops, etc.) on the schedule, I am asking every member to consider volunteering for a minimum of three events. There is a great need for volunteers to act as mentors with the Mentor Program, to do set-up and clean-up work for club workshops and Camera School, to assist with the preparation of the End of Year Banquet and club parties and to help the Program and Contest Chairpersons find programs or judges. We also desperately need people to stay until 10pm to help clean up and put away equipment before church lockup. If each of you volunteered to stay late just two nights during the year, this tiresome chore could be lifted from the handful that currently participates each night. We are club run each year entirely upon the efforts of unpaid volunteers. We ask that you support our Board and Committee representatives by offering your time to the club so that the ripples of enthusiasm and fellowship can continue to grow within the club.

We look forward to another successful and fun year!

Steve







# F o c a l P o i n t

## The Secret to Backlighting

### The Secret to Backlighting

By **Bob Knill**

Shooting a backlit subject, like every photography technique, takes some practice to get right. Backlighting is a style of lighting where the light source is on the opposite side of the subject from where the camera is; the camera is actually pointing into the light.



*f/3.2 @ 1/1000<sup>th</sup>, ISO 200)*

As you can imagine, this can cause all kinds of confusion for your camera's meter if you're not sure how to expose for this scenario.

One of two things can happen in a backlit situation (I am talking only natural light here, not using artificial light to fill in the shadows): either you expose for the bright area and knock your subject down to a silhouette, or you expose for your subject and blow out the entire background.



# F o c a l P o i n t

## The Secret to Backlighting (cont.)

Backlighting can be problematic because your camera meter doesn't quite understand what you are trying to do, and it will try to find a balance between the huge range in exposures that backlighting causes. In-camera light meters speak in terms of 18% gray. In other words, they understand what 18% gray looks like, and they try to evaluate a situation based upon that value. If the overall scene is brighter than 18% gray, your meter will tell you to close down your aperture or bump up your shutter speed until the scene's additive light value matches up to what it knows. If the scene is darker, it will tell you crank up your exposure because the scene is registering below 18% gray. This concept is huge to remember when you are trying to figure out a tough exposure.

Let's look at an example of exposing for an object when the sun is backlighting it. If you were to include the sun, or a large portion of the bright sky, in your frame, your meter would scream that the scene is too bright. If you listen to it, you might bring your exposure down until your meter is happy. The problem here is that you lose any detail information in the darker areas, and underexpose your subject. If you exposed for your subject, the sky would become a white, blached background, making the overall image look rather flat. Your camera can only see about 5-6 stops of light. Our eyes and brain can render much more. So you have a choice: expose for the details in the shadows and blow out the sky, or expose for the sky and render all the dark areas into obscurity.

Therein lies the problem with backlighting. But there are creative ways around that.



*f/3.5 @ 1/800<sup>th</sup>, ISO 200*



# F o c a l P o i n t

## The Secret to Backlighting (cont.)

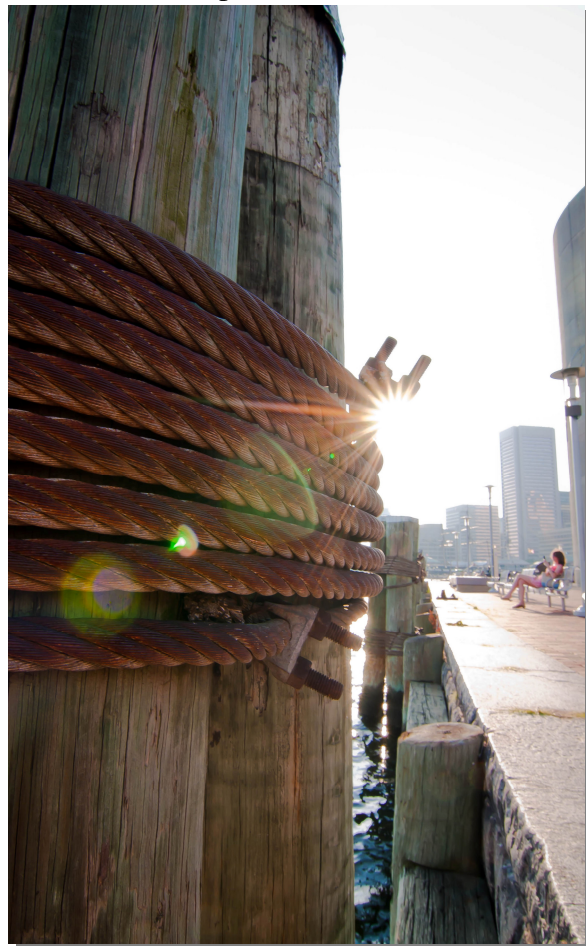
When you meter for a backlit subject, know that the sky will be blown out. You can choose to move around to keep as much of the sky out of the picture, or you can work with what you have and deliberately keep it in there. But you have to maintain the discipline to disregard your camera meter. And you have to make a deliberate attempt to blow out the sky. Blow it out and blow it out big! Make it count!

Expose for the shadow area. Stand in the shadows and expose your scene without the sun in the picture. Then simply move your feet until the sun (or a small part of it) is your composition, if that is what you are trying to capture. But don't change your exposure settings! Your meter will start to scream that you are about to overexpose a perfectly good picture. Calmly tell it to shut the hell up.

Now if you're shooting in manual mode, you're set. But if you, like me, prefer to use aperture priority or shutter priority, you have a different set of circumstances. Once you set your exposure and move the sun into the frame, your exposure will change based upon your shooting mode (either the shutter speed or aperture will change because the exposure of the scene changed). So as soon as that sun peeks around the corner, your shutter speed will skyrocket (if shooting aperture priority) or your aperture will close down (if shooting shutter priority). This is where that cool little feature of exposure lock comes into play. Once you expose for the shadows, hit the exposure lock button (looks like an asterisk (\*) on a Canon...not sure how Nikon does it).

This little button locks the exposure until you fully click the shutter. So you have the luxury of moving your composition around without having to re-meter. Exposure lock. It works. Histogram? It's gonna back the meter's argument and tell you that you've overexposed the scene and blew it like a nose. Ignore it.

Now to include that little sun flare in the picture, lock your exposure and slowly allow the sun to peek into the frame...but not all of it. Just a sliver.



*f/11 @ 1/40<sup>th</sup>, ISO 200*





# F o c a l P o i n t

## The Secret to Backlighting (cont.)

For the shots of the backlit cherry blossoms here, I locked my exposure and moved out from the shadows until the sun peeked around the corner of a building and into the frame.

This is probably not the definitive way of creatively shooting a backlit subject. Play around with it. It can help expand your creative options.



*f/4.5 @ 1/500<sup>th</sup>, ISO 200*

If you're looking for some inspiration on good backlighting technique, check out [Nick Onken](#). He gets it right. He deliberately blows out his backgrounds. But that's the strength of backlighting...you can get away with that if you make it look like that's what you meant to do. If you're looking for some inspiration on backlighting, you could do no better than [perusing his stuff](#).



# F o c a l P o i n t

## Living With Photographs

### Living with Photographs

I often find that I have to be in the right mood and frame of mind when creating photographs and then spend enough time with them before considering them complete.

When taking photographs I work hard not only to capture the image, but also to capture the experience and atmosphere. These are important elements of my work and I want to be sure they are included in the final image. Therefore I also need to be in the right frame of mind when I process the images. Unfortunately, processing the images doesn't always occur immediately after, or in some cases any time soon after the photographs were taken.

I have lots of images that I have taken during photo shoots that I have just not started to process yet, simply because my frame of mind hasn't been quite right to create the final look that I want to achieve. In some cases the raw files can sit on my hard drive for many months before the time feels right to work with them. I usually know what I want the final images to look like when I make the exposures, but if I am not in the right frame of mind when processing them, the images lose some of what I tried to include when the photographs were taken. They feel flat. Being in the right frame of mind throughout helps me add dimension to the final images and create a certain feeling.

By Arthur Ransom



Once the images have been processed I need to spend time with them before I consider them complete. This is also an important part of my workflow. I need time to experience the images. I need to look at them often and see if they take me both to a physical place and an emotional place. In other words, I try to make sure that the images not only remind me of the place but also the mood that the place imparted in me. Photographing the place is much easier to achieve than the mood. If an individual image or a group of images can emotionally return me to the place then I consider the work complete.





# F o c a l P o i n t

## Living With Photographs (cont.)

By way of example, towards the end of last winter I took two trips to the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia. I had seen some amazing work by others and saw some opportunities



that I wanted to explore. ESP was closed down in the early 1970s and efforts have been made in recent years to maintain it in an arrested state of decay. It is a massive place and the cold, hard stonework only added to a sense of confinement, isolation and desperation. I wanted to capture these feelings in the images that I took. However, the images have sat on my hard drive for several months and I have only just started to process them, mainly because I have been working other projects and I wanted to focus on the ESP project without distraction - I wanted to be in the right frame of mind. I have processed several images, and am now starting to "live with them".



# F o c a l P o i n t

## Living With Photographs (cont.)





# F o c a l P o i n t

## Living With Photographs (cont.)







# F o c a l P o i n t

## Kudos Corner

### Congratulations!!

Don Vetter and Tony Sweet won Merit Awards and Steve Dembo won an Excellence Award in **COLOR** Magazine's Annual 2010 Portfolio Contest.

The November Portfolio Contest Issue should be in bookstores and on newsstands around the first week of September



# F o c a l P o i n t

## Member Photos

Photo by Buzz Charnock





# F o c a l P o i n t

## Member Photos

Photo by Annette Conniff







# F o c a l P o i n t

## Member Photos

Photo by Annette Conniff





# F o c a l P o i n t

## Member Photos



Photo by Steve Dembo