

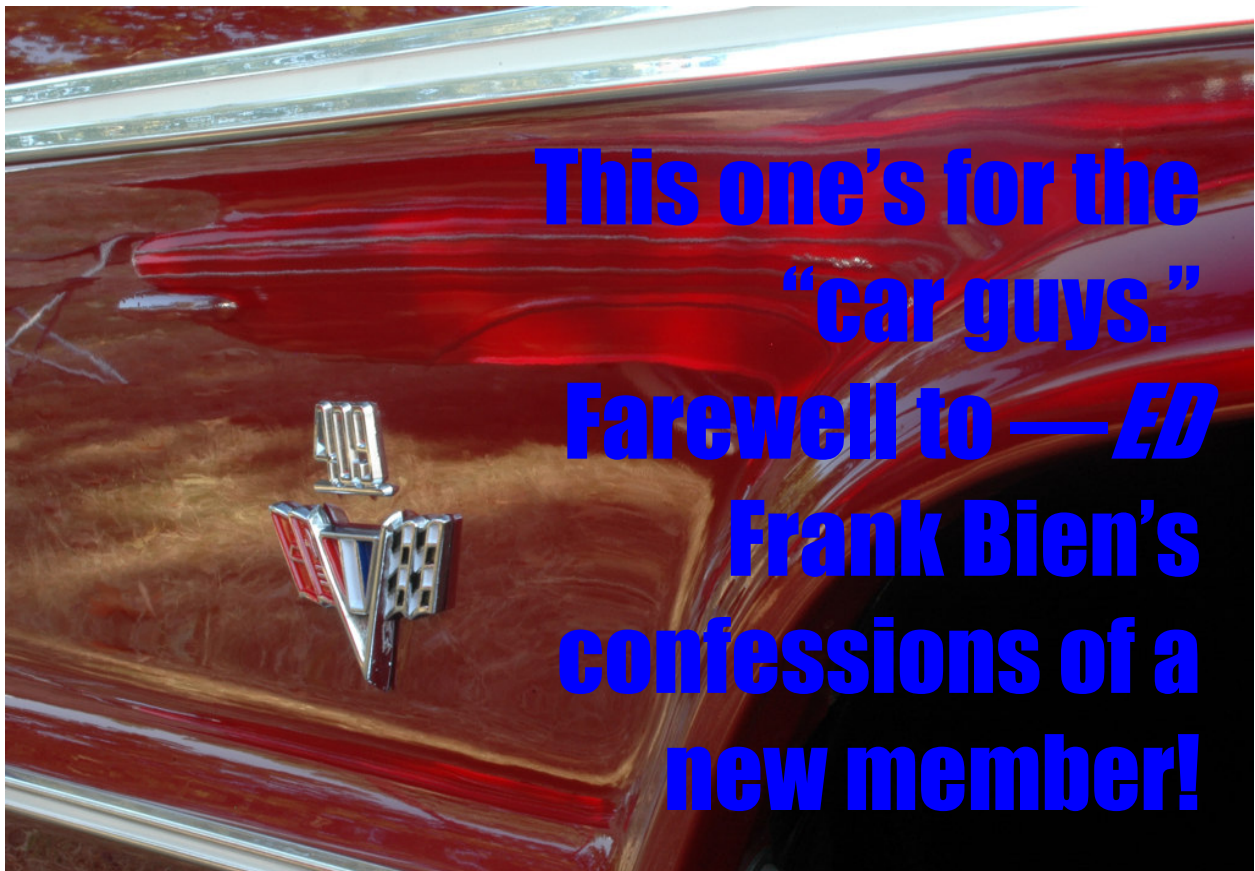


Focal Point

June—July 2008



Cover images Jim Eichelman



IMAGINATIVE REFLECTIONS by Jim Eichelman

Since I grew up around a Used Auto & Truck Parts business, also known as a junkyard, cars have always been a part of my life. I still have that passion for cars (including my 1966 Corvette) and continue to attend a number of car shows.

During the summer on a bright sunny day I tried to determine how to take photos at a car show, and started looking at the shady side of the cars and the details that make certain makes and models distinctive. As I started to shoot the detail of emblems, headlights, taillights, special wheels, brake rotors and the like, I noticed something else; there were reflections in these finely finished cars.

I set up my Nikon D70 on its tripod at knee level about two feet away from one of the cars. As I focused on one of the car's details, I saw in the side of a red Z28 Camaro a gold Camaro SS leading a line of vintage Camaros (cover, top). I moved my tripod to reframe the image and used aperture priority set to f 14 to increase the depth of field. I did not "stop down" my lens completely to f22 as I wanted to use the "sweet spot" of my 35 – 80 Nikkor lens set to an 84mm equivalent. To get the detail of the reflections as well as the clarity of the Good Year tire and hub cap the expose was fairly long, 1/8 of a second (with -1 stop exposure compensation).



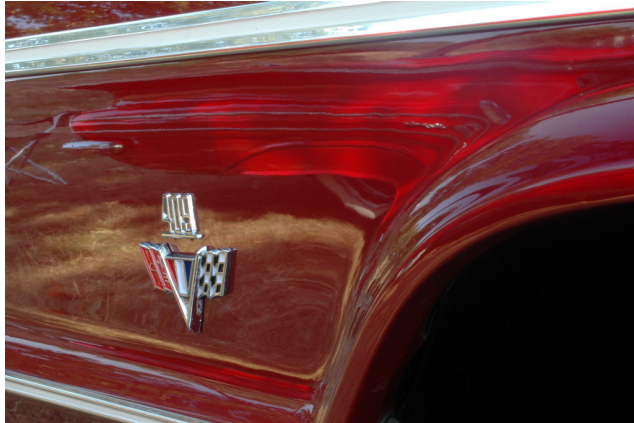
After the discovery of the reflections in the car's details I now take a few minutes to look around to visualize the images and focus not just on the car in front of me, but the multitude of images reflecting in that car. This was a significant change from my previous technique which was to focus on the car itself. When I focus on the car's details and the reflections in them, I can create much more interesting images. This method requires a different approach from photographing the entire car, but with more practice, I am better able to identify these images.

Another example of this technique was when I captured the image of a ferris wheel in the hood of the blue Corvette (above). When I was walking along looking at the show cars I happened to look down at the Corvette's hood and saw a reflection of the ferris wheel on the amusement pier at Ocean City's inlet in the hood. Camera Settings: Aperture priority -1 stop exposure compensation, f 14, 1/15th second shutter speed (with polarizer) 105mm equivalent.

(Continued on page 3)

IMAGINATIVE REFLECTIONS (Continued)

For these images, a tripod is a necessity. Since the images are composed in the shady side of the cars, they require a longer exposure. Additionally, it is important to make sure that the reflection and details of the car are sharp, and to do this,, there is a need for a great depth of field and a longer shutter speed.



While you might not think these types of images are worth your time, look no further than a recent National Geographic International Photography contest winner. These types of images present a good opportunity to sharpen your skills and enhance your creativity. See this link for the Landscape winner (from Baltimore); reflected in the trunk lid of a shiny black Buick - <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/photo-contest/photo-contest>. **(Reproduced on the next page)**



Technical Data on Jim's images

- **Crown Victoria in Mack Hubcap (left):** Aperture priority -2/3 stop exposure compensation f 5.6, 1/50th second shutter speed, 120mm equivalent

- **1960 Chevrolet reflected in Chevy 409 (above, left):** Aperture priority -1 stop exposure compensation f 22, 1 second exposure, 84mm equivalent

- **Corvette in Barracuda V8:** (not shown) Aperture priority - 3 stop exposure compensation, f 11, 1/10th second shutter speed, 78mm equivalent

- **Raven PickUp (left) in side of 1968 Road Runner:** Aperture priority - 1 stop exposure compensation, f 11, 1/8th second exposure, 102mm equivalent

EDITOR'S NOTE

This is my final issue of the Focal Point. My thanks to all who have contributed. Just for the record all text is set in 12 pt. New Times Roman and all headlines are Arial Rounded MT. Cover type is Impact. It's been fun. "See ya in English!"

—ED



Baltimore's Dottie Campbell Wins National Geographic Contest



Congratulations to Baltimore's Dottie Campbell, a fine-arts photographer based in Hampden who was named one of four winners in this year's International Photography Contest sponsored by National Geographic Magazine. Campbell's clever image of a tree reflected on the hood of a glossy black automobile won in the landscape category in both the international and English-speaking divisions of the contest from among 148,203 images submitted to the judges.

Describing Campbell's winning entry, the magazine wrote on its web site: "This year's landscape winner is a surprising composition of a scene in Moab, Utah. The photographer, a resident of Baltimore, Maryland, captured a swirl of spring cottonwood trees and other shapes reflected in a shiny black Buick. The judges were impressed with how the image stretches the definition of landscape photography and departs from the traditional and the predictable. They hailed the photographer's sophisticated eye, her ability to mix color and texture, and her skill in arranging the elements in a creative and imaginative way. She turned the car into a camera lens, its curves reflecting the landscape. A mundane scene is made extraordinary by the photographer's willingness to look beyond the expected."

Campbell's winning digital image, which earned her prizes in the form of a new camera and lens and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., will be published in the May issue of National Geographic Magazine.

Congratulations again to the artist, and we look forward to seeing more of her work when it's shown later this year in the gallery at John Hopkins University's Montgomery County campus.

(Photo courtesy of Dottie Campbell and text The Baltimore Sun)

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED AT THE BALTIMORE CAMERA CLUB BY Frank Bien (say"Bean")



After my second year of attendance at the Baltimore Camera Club (BCC) school I thought I'd make a few observations.

The instructors have such depth; you just can't learn it all the first time around. One thing I liked is that the presenters used their own images as examples rather than stock photos they downloaded from the Web. Of course the images were excellent and could have come from a text book. Although I have learned a lot since joining the BCC, I am still learning. First, I am relatively new to digital photography and second I never learned to shoot creatively; even though I have been a photographer all of my adult life.

My first camera was a Christmas present in 1948 (an Argus twin lens box camera). I shot

with 120 Verichrome film and developed it in my basement where I also made contact prints.

By the time I was in high school, I was doing the darkroom work for a professional photographer and shooting with a 4"x5" Speed Graphic. I also worked after school at Little Folks Studio, printing enlargements of babies taken by a door-to-door photographer/salesman. In high school and college, I worked for each school's newspapers and yearbooks. I also shot weddings and worked behind-the-counter of the Baltimore Photo Supply on Charles Street and Zepp Photo on Greenmount Avenue.

One reason I never learned to shoot creatively was that the professional photographers I worked for taught me to standardize. For example all wedding images were shot at 100th/sec at f/11, pre-focused at 15 feet. The downside of standardization is you never learn to control the camera. Essentially, I was using a point-and-shoot in a 4" x 5" format. The first thing I learned at the Baltimore Camera Club was to shoot more creatively.

Even in 1969 when I bought my first SLR (Nikon F), I was not shooting creatively. I got the correct exposure, but not the creatively correct exposure in the Bryan Peterson sense. Last year, I attended the BCC's Camera School where I learned about exposure and composition. On the second day of class, we attempted to capture images of spring flowers and other vegetation at Cylburn Park. Steve Harman, my mentor that day, told me to shoot in Manual and use the analogue meter in my viewfinder. I had had my Nikon D 70 for several months, but had never used the analogue meter. Since then I have read and re-read [UNDERSTANDING EXPOSURE](#) by Bryan Peterson. Now I know more about depth of field, simplifying the background and how to achieve selective focus.

I had so much to learn after transitioning from analogue to digital. Control of color temperature used to be so simple. Use one kind of film indoors and another kind out of doors. Does anyone remember the use of blue flashbulbs as fill lights with outdoor film? Digital sensors give us so much more control of the color temperature and of ISO. Now we have a half dozen White Balance controls depending on the color temperature of the environment you find yourself in. And you can actually measure the white balance with a preset or custom setting on your camera. Not enough light? No problem, just pump-up the ISO.

I was encouraged to join the BCC by Jeffery Wolk, a member who was teaching a course in Photography/Photoshop at the Dodson School of Art near my home in Glencoe. I have now attended two of Jeffery's classes and we have become good friends. Jeffery has taught me so much about the elements of photography and Photoshop both in and out of class. Jeffery taught his students about night photography, painting with light, portraiture, and table-top photography and a host of other techniques. (Continued page 6)

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED AT BCC (CONTINUED)

Jeffery has forgotten more about Photoshop than I will ever know. Two of the most helpful techniques he taught us were “Soft Focus” and “Spotlighting”. These techniques are useful in portraiture, but spotlighting has other applications, as well. Briefly, [soft focus](#) allows you to soften the overall facial skin in a portrait and then bring back into sharp focus select features like eyes, lashes and brows, lips and possibly hair and jewelry. [Spotlighting](#) allows you to vignette or darken the edges of an image so that the viewer’s eyes are drawn to the primary subject. This can be overdone. If the edges are obviously darker than the center, you have gone too far.

BCC PHOTO CONTESTS

One of the most daunting features of BCC’s annual program is the monthly print and slide competitions among members. What I had to learn was that contests were not about winning but about learning. Just learning how to prepare your three images for the digital slide contest was a challenge for me. You can learn so much just by viewing the entries of other members. And, everyone is happy to share their techniques and practices. The most helpful to me is to have the judges critique the images that did not successfully compete for one of the six prizes in a given category.

This year, I started to submit some of my images in the digital contests. To my great surprise, I actually placed in three contests. (see below)

I have learned so much since joining the BCC. I hope to tell you more of what I learned in future articles and encourage other members to do the same.

