



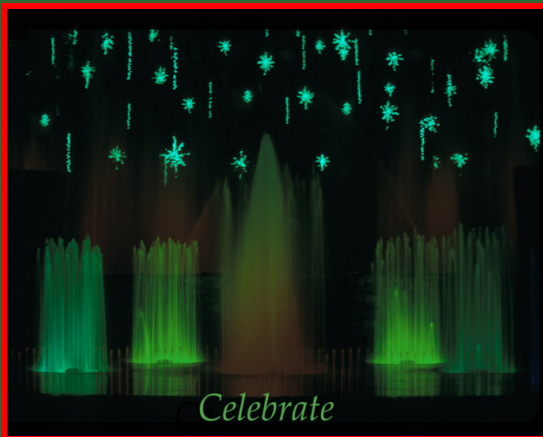
The Focal Point

December 2004



SEASON OF LIGHT

Longwood Gardens 2003 Karen Messick



Celebrate

Longwood Gardens Karen Mes-



34th Street Hampden

Anna M. Santana

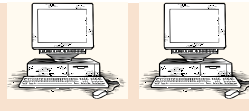
See Page 12 for more on these photo Opps in 2004



34th Street Hampden

Stephen Strathdee

Bedke's Page.....



Adobe Photoshop to fit photos when printing:

Some new digital camera owners run into trouble when they try to print their photos and discover that the photos are too big to fit on the paper, even 8.5x11" paper. To make the images print the correct size Choose Image>Image Size, uncheck the Resample Image checkbox, and then change the Resolution to 300 ppi. By unchecking Resample Image, you tell Photoshop to make the pixels smaller but to use all of them. You can now print a high-quality image that preserves all of the original data.

Adobe Photoshop put several images on a single sheet

Photoshop 7 and CS Picture Package can put a number of different images on a single sheet. (The earlier versions could only replicate a single image.)

The technique:

1. Open the dialog box with File > Automate > Picture Package.
2. From the pop-up menu, select the page layout you need.
3. In the Layout area, click on a preview image box.
4. Select the file to put in that spot.
5. Click on another preview and select a file.
6. Repeat until you have selected a file for each image on the page, then print.

When you make a mistake, make amends immediately.
It's easier to eat crow while it's still warm.

You need only two tools: WD-40 and duct tape.
If it doesn't move and it should, use WD-40.
If it moves and shouldn't, use the tape.



Quotes from Ansel Adams

"I respect everything in change and the solemn beauty of life and death. I believe that man will obtain freedom of spirit of society and therefore, while man amidst the eminence of beauty of objective bodies, he must possess the capacity of self perfection and must observe and represent his world with full confidence. I believe photography is a tool to express our positive assessment of the world. A tool to acquire ultimate happiness and belief."

"Dodging and burning are steps to take care of mistakes God made in establishing tonal relationships!"

"Photography is more than a medium for factual communication of ideas. It is a creative art."

The 2005 Vacation season is not that far away, Utah is a great destination for travel experiences and pictorial photography.



I wish I'd said that:

"Landscape photography is the supreme test of the photographer — and often the supreme

Springtime, April to mid-May especially, can be great in Canyonlands and Arches when the cactus and Indian Paintbrush are blooming. Usually good weather and not quite so many people unless you happen to hit the Jeep Jamboree in Moab. The Canyonlands area in June has little biting gnats come out and nothing stops them. The rest of the year is pretty bug-free.

The worst photographic time is mid-May through the end of June since it is often hot and crowded and there are rarely any stormy weather days, just deadly clear skies.

Late summer, mid-July thru September, can be great if you get a series of afternoon monsoon thunderstorms with dark skies followed by clearing skies, and a spectacular rainbow.

It is generally hazy when the wind direction is from the southwest, as smog from the LA basin, hundreds of miles away, moves in. It is generally clear with 100+ mile visibility when the prevailing wind is from the west or northwest.

Fall can be great for good weather and the colors are usually excellent in Zion around mid-Oct to mid-Nov.

Winter can be great if you get a nice snowstorm followed by clearing skies, especially at Bryce and Canyonlands. For some reason the snowstorms are hard to predict in this area, the normal winter light without snow is too hazy and dull.



BCC Calendar 2004 - 2005

Thursday December 2	Print Contest	
Thursday December 9	Slide Contest	
Thursday December 16	Holiday Party	
Thursday December 23	No Meeting	Merry Christmas
Thursday December 30	No Meeting	Happy New Year
Thursday January 6	Print Contest	
Thursday January 13	Program	Filtering for film & CCD (digital) in Black & White
Thursday January 20	Slide Contest	
Thursday January 27	Program	"Mylar Night" Table Top Shoot and Instruction
Thursday February 3	Print Contest	
Thursday February 10	Program	
Thursday February 17	Slide Contest	
Thursday February 24	Program	
Thursday March 3	Print Contest	
Thursday March 10	Program	
Thursday March 17	Slide Contest	

2004-2005 BCC Officers and Board Members

PRESIDENT	John Borleis	410-254-6297	marauder.joe@verizon.net
V.P. PROGRAMS	Gary Faulkner	410-529-7362	brycekid@verizon.net
V.P. CONTESTS	Jane McManus	410-683-0333	
V.P. CONTESTS	Tony Webb	410-415-7376	awebb3296@aol.com
TREASURER	Michael Boardman	410-433-8976	boardman@math.jhu.edu
SECRETARY	Barbara K. Smothers	410-728-0723	barkiahs@aol.com
MEMBER AT LARGE <i>Marketing</i>	Jay Daley	410-715-1643	
MEMBER AT LARGE <i>Marketing</i>	Lewis Katz	410-542-5719	basskatz@comcast.net
WEB SITE TEAM	Gene Bessette	410-536-8108	zootsuit@crosslink.net
	Liana Rieckert	410-943-4820	lianarieckert@yahoo.com
	Paul McKeown	410-444-1024	celticlight@verizon.net
FOCAL POINT EDITOR, PSA Contact	Karen Messick	410-337-2939	karenskier@aol.com

Competition Winners

Competition Results November Slides

NOVICE COLOR SLIDES			UNLIMITED SLIDES		
1st	Embracing	Lewis Katz	1st	Profile In Nature	Barry Christie
2nd	Fall Foliage	Lewis Katz	2nd	Day Dreaming	Karen Messick
3rd	Fire In The Sky	Peter Cibor	3rd	The First Washington Monument	Jane McManus
4th	Night Flower	Lewis Katz	4th	Lake Gordon Bridge	Karen Messick
5th	Early Sun On Bryce	Tirtha Chakraborty	5th	Millside	John Borleis
HM	Cicada on Yellow Rose	Paul McKeown	HM	Shenandoah Spring Time	Gary Faulkner

Baltimore Camera Club December 2004

Competition Results November Prints

NOVICE MONOCHROME PRINTS			UNLIMITED MONOCHROME PRINTS		
1st	Mystery Night	Arnold Nosnitzky	1st		
2nd	Washington Marble	Charles Collier	2nd		
3rd	Blade	Steve Harmon	3rd		
4th	Point Of View	Arnold Nosnitzky	4th		
5th	Racks	Steve Harmon	5th		
HM	Shadows on the steps	Karen Messick	HM		

No Contest Insufficient Entries

NOVICE COLOR PRINTS			UNLIMITED COLOR PRINTS		
1st	River Survivor	Steve Harmon	1st	Placido Domingo	Paul McKeown
2nd	Homeless In the Greatest City	Anna Santana	2nd	Army Transport	Paul McKeown
3rd	Summer Coneflower	Steve Harmon	3rd	8 Million Dollar View	Karen Messick
4th	Set Sail	Anna Santana	4th	Worthington	Paul McKeown
5th	Red Poppy	Steve Harmon	5th	Macau	Paul McKeown
HM	Next Stop Ellicott Mills	Barry Foster	HM	Fire Bell	Jay Daley

From the Editor

Nova Scotia May 21-28..see Gary or Karen for information....

Correspondence :

NOVA SCOTIA PLANNING

Hi Karen,

If you are coming to Nova Scotia I'd recommend you request a copy of the Doer and Dreamers guide. It is free and will provide lots of tourist information. It is available here:

<http://www.novascotia.com/>

Some popular places are: Peggys Cove is one of the most popular tourist sights and fishing village in Atlantic Canada.

<http://www.peggys-cove.com/>

Fortress of Louisburg is a large restoration of a French fort. It's been used by Disney. In the summertime they have many people dressed in period costumes who can provide detailed information about the former residents of Louisburg.

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/louisbourg/enghome.html>

Annapolis Valley It's on the Evangeline Trail. I like the Wolfville area, Annapolis Royal and Digby. All of these places are on or near the Bay of Fundy which has the world's highest tides. Sandpipers stop at the Bay of Fundy for two weeks in August to feed before they migrate to South America in the fall. I hear they stop at Chesapeake Bay when they migrate north in the spring to feed when the crabs hatch.

<http://www.novascotia.com/howtogetaround/evangeline/morephotos.htm>

Mahone Bay/Lunenburg It's on the Lighthouse Trail. Two very picturesque villages on the South Shore. Lunenburg in the home of the Bluenose II.

<http://www.novascotia.com/howtogetaround/lighthouse/morephotos.htm>

Check out the above. If you have more questions let me know. If certain subjects interest you I can provide more specific info.

We have a field trip to Cape Split on May 21st to take pictures of the wild flowers. You are welcome to join us.

It's near Wolfville in the Annapolis valley.

Peter Steeper President

Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia

Webmaster www.photoguild.ns.ca

www.photoguild.ns.ca



Web Stuff

WEB SURFIN'

By Paul McKeown

For those who expressed interest, here's a link to a transcript of the "composition elements for the final image" talk I gave on the 28th October -

http://www.celticlight.net/article/composition_article.html

And here are three more articles on composition -

<http://www.photoinf.com/>

<http://www.apogeephoto.com/mag1-6/mag2-3mf.shtml>

<http://www.photomigrations.com/articles/0209300.htm>

Find us at -

<http://www.baltimorecameraclub.org/>

Composition for the Print

"There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs." - Ansel Adams

This article is about Composition in general, composing for the final print in particular, and very particularly, composing and printing for BCC print competitions.

Composing for printing can be seen as a three-stage process –

1. Exposure
2. Manipulation
3. Printing

1. EXPOSURE

Even in the digital age, this is the critical part of the print. Although we can 'fix it in the mix', it's a lot of work, and there are limits to what can be done. Get your composition right in camera, save yourself a lot of work later. When you're peering through the viewfinder, trigger finger poised, give these some thought –

BASIC STUFF

Simplify - the most basic question - *what is the subject?* Where will it be placed in the frame? Decide what you're taking a photo of, everything else falls into place.

Examine all corners of the finder- Your brain automatically eliminates everything but the subject – your camera doesn't.

Eliminate clutter – litter, bright spots, distracting elements all fight for viewer's attention.

Background – the BG can be more than 50% of your image - is your BG clean, uniform, out of focus enough, dark, light? – paying attention here pays a bonus later.

Get in Close - Fill the Frame – yeah, yeah, we've heard this before. Sure you can crop later, but why waste all that resolution you paid the big bucks for?

Skies – If it's a gray, cloudy day, consider eliminating the sky from your shot altogether. If it can't be eliminated, include as little as possible.

IF YOU HAVE TIME

Investigate alternate viewpoints – Walk around your subject, work the angles, lean over, look up, crouch, lie down, step up on a wall.

Horizontal / Vertical – Which camera position suits your subject? – if in doubt, shoot both

What lens? – This choice can have a profound effect on the image, and can't really be altered later

Color or B&W? – if you're using film, this is a choice you pretty much have to make at the exposure stage.

BASIC RULES OF COMPOSITION

Rule of Thirds/ Fifths – a hoary old chestnut, but worth knowing about. The principle has a long and interesting history.

Leading Lines – roads, fences, tracks can all add interest by leading your viewer into the print. Be careful they don't lead him out, too!

Repeating Shapes – a line of objects – bottles, buildings, traffic cones, etc, even people, seen from an angle, will become a pattern; can be good alone or as a background.

Color contrasts – Study the color wheel – complementary / competing colors. A subject on a background of the opposite color will always stand out.

Light and Dark – Contrasting the subject with the background is always effective.

Scale – When photographing landscapes, it can be a good idea to include something to show scale – a human, an animal, even trees will do.

Remember, above all, rules are made to be broken. If you know the rule, and why you're breaking it, then you're well on the way to developing a style of your own. When you're struggling to put a subject on a third, and it's crying out to be in the center, put it in the center – it's your photo!

PONDERING YOUR PICTURE – THE ZEN OF PRINTING

Now your photograph is in your hands. You're looking at a proof, or a slide on a lightbox, or a raw file on a computer screen. This is where the techniques stop and the art begins. Make a cup of tea, sit back with a beer, imbibe your libation of choice and just look. Don't do anything, don't think, just take a few slow, deep breaths and look. Some things will gradually become apparent – like Michelangelo's sculpture, where he took a block of marble and 'freed' the shape within – an image will tell you how it wants to be presented. It can help to half-close your eyes, or to regard the image as you would a 'magic eye' picture where you defocus, and the picture within the picture becomes clear. As you do this, you will become aware of elements of design in your image becoming apparent. Here, looking carefully at your raw picture, what you saw out in the field in that split second of time before pressing the shutter will often beg to be ordered, and made sense of. Very often your brain knew there was a picture there, but your eye didn't quite have time to see it.

Here are a few things to watch for –

Rule of Thirds / Fifths - I know I mentioned this before, but quite often a simple crop will make everything fall into place – be aware of the Golden Mean, it can be a very good guide to pleasing proportions in your images.

Dynamic Diagonals – These make for very dynamic prints, and often simply rotating your original a little can bring out a diagonal that was previously buried.

Horizontals– Usually bring a sense of tranquility to a photo. Again a little rotation can make a big difference. You almost certainly want to have a level horizon, especially for seascapes!

Triangles– Another fairly dynamic shape, which has the advantage of keeping the viewers eye traveling inside the image, which is a good thing.

Circles - If you can place or emphasize circular shapes or paths within your image, you will have a lot of success at keeping people's attention, since it's difficult for the eye to wander out of a circle.

of subjects - If your image has more than one subject, be aware that, for some reason, odd numbers are better than even (two beautiful models is good, three is better...)

Leading Lines – As mentioned leading lines are a great way of making the viewer follow a path through the image, but they should lead to something, otherwise the wandering eye will wander straight out and off somewhere else! Ideally they should run up to the subject, or from the subject to a destination. Leading lines don't have to be actual tracks or lines; they can be implied (a mother gazing at a baby, groom looking at bride, etc).

S-Curves – Are a very elegant form of the leading line – country lanes, rivers, ski tracks etc can all be of help here.

A FEW, MORE PHILOSOPHICAL, THOUGHTS

The art of composition doesn't always have to be about physical things – shapes, lines objects –all the best images have good composition plus a little something extra.

Imagination – you don't always have to tell the whole story in your photos. The art of understatement should be a part of your philosophy. Leave 'em wanting more – let the viewer use their imagination to complete the picture. This could be a slice of time– what just happened? - what happens next? - or perhaps something intriguing just out of shot – our subject is the reaction of people in the shot.

Question – Make the viewer work – why did he take this shot? – what did he see that should interest me? The Devil's in the details, sometimes. Of course, if you're too subtle, our gentle viewer will get bored, give up and go home.

Message – No doubt about it, images are a powerful tool. Commercials, politicians, propagandists all would be nothing without imagery of the highest quality. For instance, think of Nazi Germany –you are probably envisaging the images of Leni Riefenstahl. Now while you definitely don't want to work for Hitler, it's a valuable skill to be able to make images whose composition imparts a message.

BASIC TOOLS FOR DARKROOM AND LIGHTROOM (COMPUTER) MANIPULATION

I'm pretty sure all the following techniques can be used (with a deal of work) in the traditional darkroom. I know they are very effective, and relatively simple to achieve in the Lightroom.

Crop, Crop, Crop! – The most basic tool of all, perhaps. Can bring out the picture within the picture, fine tune and balance an already good image, or eliminate distractions at the edge (or maybe just elevate an average image to something better).

Brightness – The classic well lit or backlit subject against a dark background. Conversely, just as effective can be a Silhouette against a properly exposed BG.

Hue & Tint – Saturating, or changing the color of the subject can give it prominence. Red, orange and yellow are all colors that catch the eye, and can make a small item stand out against a large background.

Selective Focus – If your background is too sharp and elements are distracting, then try a little judicious masking and blurring, leaving the subject sharp.

Saturation – or de-saturation of the whole image can bring a dead or overly garish image back to life.

Local Contrast – A subject with the full range of contrast against a more muted (less contrasty) background again reduces the importance of background distractions.

THE PRINT, MOUNTING AND PRESENTATION

(Or - what I have learned about BCC print competitions.)

Standardize – It's very time consuming and labor intensive to print and mount photos at different ratios and sizes. I basically have settled on three ratios for prints - **1:1** (square) **2:1** (panoramic) and **3:2** (regular ratio of 35mm film). With some judicious use of cropping and resizing, rarely will an image fail to fit into one of these sizes. (This may vary depending on what format you're shooting with, and your style of shooting). This allows for standard matte and materials (printing paper) sizes. Remember that the BCC lightbox is a fixed size, and the club rules don't allow for anything longer than 20", so, for instance, a very long panorama (at, say 4:1 ratio) can have a length of 20", but a maximum height of only 5".

Frames – While we're not allowed to submit framed photos, and double matting can be hideously expensive, a little judicious extra printing can fool the eye and make for a more attractive presentation. I do this on the computer, but I guess some pen & ink work in the darkroom could achieve the same effect. I make a new blank 'canvas' (PS talk for 'working area') of the final size I want my image + border to be (for instance, image is 15" x 10", and a border of ¼" all round, makes a canvas sized 15½" x 10½"). The software I use makes it very simple to put lines round the outside of the canvas, I'm sure there are similar actions in Photoshop. You can have a basic black border, you can pick a color from the image, or you can alternate colors to simulate a window matte. I then save and name my border file for use on all images of that ratio. You should make sure the 'border' file is the same type (tiff, jpeg) and at the same resolution as the image file

Lastly, I **composite** (fit inside) the image I'm printing with the border image, making sure that it fits neatly inside. If you resize your original image to fit (in this example to 15" x 10") it will be much simpler to composite them. Another small thing to make life easy - at the center point of each side of the border I put a 1 pixel line or mark – this is practically invisible, but makes mounting the print to the matte very easy.

Size Matters! – This is purely a matter of personal opinion, formed from watching our erstwhile judges at work, but the bigger you can make your print, the better it is likely to do in BCC competitions. Many indescribably beautiful, detailed small prints have fallen by the wayside, because the exquisite detail is not obvious to the judge in the approximately 10 seconds she is given to view the print at competition. (Please address all letters of outrage to the editor!)

Color - The same print when viewed in sunlight, in shade, or in tungsten lamp light will show different color casts. Those of us fortunate enough to have some control over the color temperature of our prints can compensate for this. As time goes on, the viewing box lamps in the BCC lightbox are gradually changing color temperature. The lightbox is on the warm (red) side of 5000° Kelvin (daylight) at the present time. If you can, take into account the viewing conditions, and adjust accordingly when printing. (This applies to **all** viewing conditions - whether top notch galleries or your dining room).

THE FINAL IMAGE – LESS THAN THREE BUCKS?

So how can you possibly afford to enter eight mounted images - four mono, four color - every single month during competition season?

Like this –

Printer – A three-year-old Epson 1280. The advantage is that this model has been out for a while, so reliable alternative technologies have become available for it – like –

Continuous Flow Systems– or Continuous Ink Systems, these consist of bottles of ink that sit by the side of the printer, connected to a dummy cartridge in the printer head by flexible plastic tubing. Ink is sucked from the bottles, up the tubes and into the cartridge to feed the nozzles. In the past these systems have been finicky and prone to clogs, but nowadays they are very reliable. Start up costs are greater, you have to buy and install the system, but compared to using Epson OEM cartridges, running a CFS is incredibly cheap. The inks now offered can rival in all ways Epson's original ink, at something like one tenth of the running cost. I estimate that the ink for a 13" x 17" print costs **15¢** using this system.

Paper - As long as you don't expect 100-year archival museum quality prints, then there is a huge choice of inexpensive photo printing paper out there, which will give very satisfactory results for competition entry. The paper I use works out at about

\$1.20 for 'B' size (17" x 11") Really, this is all you need. Save the expensive Museum Cotton Rag for your first gallery show!

Mattes – There appears to be a fairly good choice of Art & Craft stores in the Baltimore area. The club is (probably) getting a list together of popular local suppliers. I buy 40" x 30" matte boards, and have them cut into 4 x 20" x 16" mattes for a total of \$6.00, or **\$1.50** per matte.

The Fixin's - glue the print to the board using an applicator called a 'Rollataq', which puts a nice even layer of glue on the board. It remains positionable for about five minutes after application – this is where the pre-printed centering marks in the print borders come in handy! Put a paper towel over the face of the print, and use an ink roller to smooth it down. One application comes in at a big **5¢**.

Totals – Per 15" x 10" Print, mounted.

Matte board \$1.50

Ink \$0.15

Paper \$1.20

Glue \$0.05

TOTAL \$2.90

Caveats The CIS system costs more initially. To get the per-sheet price on paper you have to buy 100 sheets at once. I mess up prints when glue gets on them. I'm not counting test prints. I'm not counting the initial capital costs of the printer and computer. I'm not counting the large time investment to set it all up and the endless futzing around. I didn't mention the cost of the paper cutter. And so on...

RESOURCES

Hopefully this will become the basis of an ongoing data bank for resources that all of us can contribute to.

RESOURCES FOR BCC PRINT COMPETITION ENTRIES

Composition Articles –

<http://www.photoinf.com/>

<http://www.apogeephoto.com/mag1-6/mag2-3mf.shtml>

<http://www.photomigrations.com/articles/0209300.htm>

This Article Also Appears on Pauls Web Site @

http://www.celticlight.net/article/composition_article.html

Photographers Resources

Matte Board –

AC Moore

Avenues at White Marsh

8115 D Honeygo Blvd

Nottingham, MD 21236

410-931-7580

Mon-Sat 9:30am-9:30pm

Sun 10am-6pm

about \$5.00 / 40" x 32" sheet – will cut into 4 x
16x20 for another \$0.50

Service Photo,

3838 Falls Road, Baltimore, Md., (Hampden)

Phone: (410) 2356200 sells a package of

16"x20" mattes, uncut, for about \$1.40

for each matt-e, plus tax.

(Thanks Gene)

Epson Photo Paper –

Epson Photo Glossy 11x17 20-Sheets \$21.95 # S

041156

Gateway

Continuous Flow Ink Systems -

MIS associates

Glue & Applicator

Daige Inc

1 Albertson Ave.

Albertson, New York, 11507

Rollataq 2¼" Hand Applicator

(comes with 2 oz. bottle of adhesive) \$29.95

From the Program Coordinator

Skills improvement assignmetn is to begin to shoot
“Backlit Images.”

This assignment will help us brush up our skills
and help us look at images from a new perspective.

Read on to see the Article from Stephen Strathdee
to get some tips, on page 13 and 14.

The program for Nov. 11th featured photographer
Joe Giordano. His photo work is nighttime and
he is working on a book titled "American
Darkness". Joe has two images of Baltimore
that are in the Library of Congress collection.
We all enjoyed his company and insight into
his images. Thank you Gary for bringing to our
meeting a new look at photography.

Holiday Social

**Thursday December 16, Join the club for some
fun and good food shared by members.**

**Bring your favorite dish, dessert or snacks to be
included in the offerings for the evening.**

☒ **Be There!**

In a city known for distinctive neighborhoods, Hampden feels like a small town, with modest homes that retain their original charm and locals that still use that Baltimore term of endearment - - Hon (as in " **How ya doin', Hon?**") Visit Hampden for the [Miracle on 34th Street](#) a Nationally famous Christmas display of thousands of lights on a single residential block (700 West 34th Street).

See laughing Santas, manger scenes, and dazzling displays that draw thousands of awe-struck tourists. [Get Directions](#) to Hampden!

**CHRISTMAS STREET LIGHTS UP
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2004!**

Nightly from Dusk until 11 PM or so

Weekends sometimes later

All night Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

DON'T MISS: The Mayor's Christmas Parade - Sunday, December 5th, at 2 PM!

Every year the residents of the 700 block of W. 34th Street in the beautiful and historic neighborhood of Hampden in Baltimore, Maryland, decorate their houses and street both for the holidays, and for our friends and neighbors here in the city and across the world via this website. The photo pages feature hundreds of shots by amateurs and professional photographers since 1997 that show the changes made every year, and the webcam offers an almost live view of the festivities. Whether you're touring our street online or planning a holiday visit we welcome you and hope you enjoy your visit to Christmas Street.

**A Longwood Gardens Christmas
November 28, 2002-January 5, 2003**

<http://www.longwoodgardens.org/SeasonalFestivals/2002Christmas.htm>

Longwood Gardens celebrates the season with a holiday spectacle considered "the best Christmas display in the world" by London's *Financial Times*. The 2002 display runs November 28 thru January 5, 2003. Thousands of brilliant poinsettias, towering trees, fragrant flowers, and exotic plants fill four acres of gardens inside Longwood's heated Conservatory. Daily concerts (except on November 29), fountain shows, and evening light displays add to the holiday magic.

The Gardens are open every day 9 am-9 pm (the Conservatory opens at 10 am), including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Days. The Terrace Restaurant and the Gardens Shop are also open daily. Admission prices during the Christmas display are \$15 for adults (no discount on Tuesdays), \$6 ages 16-20, \$2 ages 6-15, and free under age 6. (From November 28 through December 20, Longwood visitors receive \$2 off an ADULT admission on the day they donate a new, unwrapped toy to NBC 10/B101 FM Radio's Toys for Kids Campaign at Longwood in conjunction with The Salvation Army.)

Backlighting

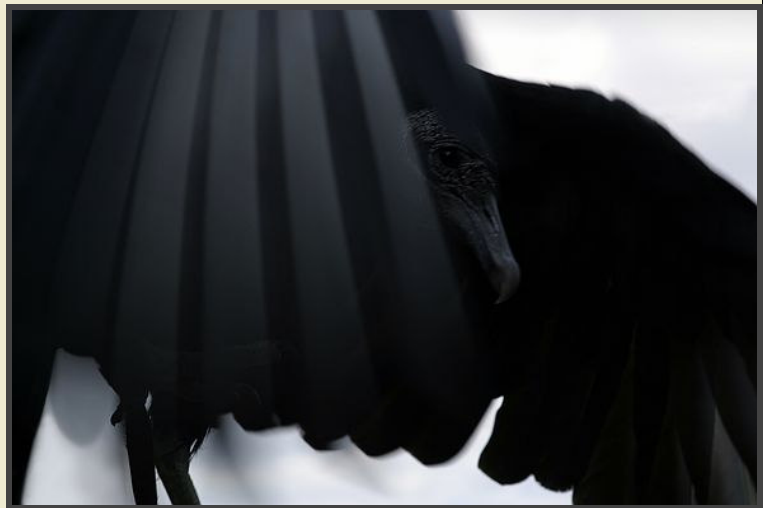
Article and Photos by Stephen Strathdee (Except of course the one of Winston Churchill)

Backlighting is just as it sounds: the dominant light for a photo comes from behind its subject. This is what turns a palm tree into a silhouette against the setting sun. In this case it's a good thing, truly capturing the moment. But backlighting can present a significant problem, too. What if you want to photograph someone, but there's strong lighting behind her - you need to be able to see at least *some* detail!



Let's start by exploring the silhouette. In this type of shot the background is exposed correctly but the subject is underexposed. Interestingly-shaped things benefit the most from this technique - the form and shape of the subject are very easily appreciated. If your subject is not too large in the frame, simply shoot it as metered: the camera will expose for the bright background, thereby underexposing your subject. Be careful if you meter with the sun in the frame - your photograph will be too underexposed! To correctly meter with the sun, or if the subject fills too much of the frame, first compose with your view adjacent to the subject, and then lock the exposure (via the exposure lock button, keeping the shutter button semi-depressed, or by shooting in manual mode). Now recompose on your subject, and shoot.

It's also possible to turn the silhouette technique on its ear by exposing the subject correctly and overexposing the background. A portrait in front of a large window or a situation where you want the subject superimposed on a white, featureless background benefit well from this. There are two ways to achieve this effect, the easiest being to override your camera's automatic metering by overexposing a stop or two, depending on the strength of your subject in relation to the amount of backlighting. Just remember to set it back after you're done! Another way is to change the metering setting from full-frame evaluative to center-weighted or partial-center, depending on the size of the subject in the frame. Unless you have a reason for doing it, it's usually a good idea to avoid using this technique - the results tend to be displeasing due to the harshly overexposed background.



The most difficult shot to achieve may be the one in which both the strongly-lit background and the dimly-lit subject are correctly exposed. The easiest way to accomplish this is to use a flash to provide the light for your subject, which means that you'll have to be fairly close to your target. Again, simply shoot as metered: the camera will expose for the bright background, and the flash will compensate for the lack of light close to you. You can add a bit of drama by underexposing the background by a half-stop or so, perhaps in combination with a bit of flash overcompensation. For those of us who prefer to use only natural or available light, the only option is to position things so that incident light is illuminating the subject. Reflecting surfaces, such as large windows and handheld reflectors, can work wonders here.



Backlighting can also be used in a more subtle way – most dramatically in portraits. You can use a remote flash (in a pinch, a small lamp will do) to illuminate the area behind your subject. A variation of this technique is to direct the light forward, towards the camera, illuminating the outline of your subject, or even giving it a “halo”. Yousef Karsh was a master at this. He traveled with an immense and elaborate battery of lights, and some of his work forms the mental images that many of us have of his subjects.



Now that you know a bit more about it, and perhaps have a few ideas, get shooting!

Links of Interest

The Narrative -

<http://www.thenarrative.net>

Double Exposure Magazine -

http://photoworkshop.com/double_exposure/publish

The Mirror Project -

<http://www.mirrorproject.com>

photoinsider Magazine -

<http://www.photoinsider.com>

Local Professionals

Kyle Bergner -

<http://www.kylebergner.com>

Jennifer Bishop -

<http://www.jenniferbishoppography.com>

John Dean -

<http://www.johndeanphoto.com>

Dennis Drenner -

<http://www.dennisdrenner.com>

Timothy Edberg -

<http://www.edbergphoto.com>

Chris Hartlove -

<http://www.chrishartlove.com>

David Hawxhurst -

<http://www.hawxhurst.com>

Judy Herrmann -

<http://www.hsstudio.com>

Howard Korn -

<http://www.hmkorn.com>

Nicholas McIntosh -

<http://www.nicholasmcintosh.com>

Alan Partlow -

<http://www.alanpartlowphotography.com>

Greg Pease -

<http://www.gregpeasephoto.com>

Edwin Remsberg -

<http://www.remsberg.com>

Josh Reynolds -

<http://www.jrimaging.com>

Rich Riggins -

<http://www.richriggins.com>

