



The IMAGE

View from the Boardroom

by Howard Margules

Competition: The Agony & The Ecstasy

Over the many years I have been in the club, I have been both a participant in competitions and exhibits as well as judging a few. Since competition season is close, I thought it might be helpful to members, who have not yet entered the competitive realm, to review what I have observed and why I encourage members to enter.

There are some clubs that are very competitive. Around here, New Haven is known for making competitions a high priority, and they compete on a regular basis and winning gains you a higher ranking in the club. To me, that is a little over the top even though they have nurtured some very fine photographers. There are some clubs like The Connecticut Valley Camera Club that do not have any competitions. They feel the downside of competition is greater than the upside, but they do have juried exhibits where images must be approved before entering.

Our club is somewhere in the middle. We hold one in-house competition, one jointly with another club, and we have exhibits that are judged. We also participate in the CAP 40 slide review. We allow our members to either compete or not, and there is no penalty for not competing. I like our approach to exhibits where we provide awards in multiple categories so it allows diverse photographic approaches to be recognized, and provides more opportunities to win some award.

The simple reason why I advocate participating in competitions is that, in my opinion, it makes you a better photographer. This is true as long as you approach it with an open mind which is not always easy to do since many photographers become emotionally attached to their images. Many find losing is too painful, and if you do, you probably will not enjoy competing. On the other

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NOV. - DEC. ASSIGNMENT

This assignment is "Change of Seasons." Since the weather is now turning colder this would be a good time to submit pictures of what the change of seasons means to you. Post your shots to our flickr group.

As usual, have fun and be creative, upload them to your flickr account, and post the three best to the Coastal Camera Club's flickr group.

Meetings

November 5, 2014

First of two critique sessions of members work.

November 19, 2014

Jesse Thompson of Milford Photo presents a program on street photography. Get some ideas on how to take interesting, thought provoking images which tell a story.

December 4, 2014

Scranton Library Opening. Meeting will be held at the Scranton library, Madison, CT. In this reception, open to the public, the club will share some of its latest images and be able to discuss why the art of photography excites us so.

December 4, 2014

Potluck Christmas Party / Club fall project. Come and enjoy good food and conversation. Fall project will be shown.

NEED MORE INFORMATION? TRY LOOKING ON ONE OF THESE SITES:

If you need something, you can probably find it on the Internet. You just need to know where to look. For Coastal Camera Club information, please try these sites:

www.coastalcameraclub.org - the official club website

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER REFRESHMENTS:

November 5, 2014.....

November 19, 2014

December 4, 2014Pot Luck Scranton Opening

December 17, 2014Club Supplied Food - Members are asked to bring Appetizer, a Side Dish or Dessert

Follow these rules when submitting any image to the Coastal Camera Club:

Files must be named using the following format:

X#\$Coastal\$LastName\$FistName\$ImageTittle\$YYYY-MM.jpg

Where X=the type of file (Open, Digital Art, Black&White, etc) and YYYY-MM is the year and month of the event for which you are submitting the file. For example, O2\$Coastal\$Smith\$John\$The Red Barn\$2011-01, this is an image titled *The Red Barn* by John Smith of the Coastal Camera Club to be submitted to a competition in January of 2011.

Please remember the maximum size for competitions is 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels tall. If the files are to be used in a club critique, they can be full size.

Images must be submitted to ccc.images@gmail.com with the subject line indicating the event for which you are submitting.

If you have any questions, please contact Lou Secki at lou.secki@gmail.com.

The Coastal Camera Club meets at 7:00pm on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at the new Madison Senior Center located at 29 Bradley Road in Madison, Connecticut.

ASK THE BOARD

By Lou Secki

The Coastal Camera Club’s board would like to help answer any of those burning photographic questions you need answered. We would also like to make this a regular column, so send your questions to lou.secki@gmail.com with the subject line “Ask The Board,” and we will do our best to answer your questions. Chances are if you have a question, someone else has the same one. So don’t be shy - start sending in your questions.



WRITE FOR *THE IMAGE*

Help write our newsletter. If you ever wanted to see your name in print as a “by” line, now is your chance. Share breaking news pertaining to photography, write a review of some new piece of gear you bought, let the rest of the club know about a tip or trip you started using. You can share basically anything photography related with the rest of the club through the newsletter. All you have to do is write it up and I will publish it in the bi-monthly newsletter. Don’t worry about formatting, just send me a text file and I will do the rest. Send your submissions to Lou Secki (lou.secki@gmail.com) with the subject line of “newsletter contribution.”

We would also like submissions as “letters to the editor.” Ask questions, make suggestions or just make a comment. Let the rest of the club know what you are thinking about and interested in.



CAMERA CLUB IDEAS

When it comes to places to shoot and things to do the club is always looking for new and interesting ideas. So, if anyone has any idea for meet-up/ shooting locations, workshops and/ or workshop leaders or even have any ideas on places we can go as a field trip let us know. Please contact Nick Carlino (ncarlino@hotmail.com) and he will try to get them worked into our club schedule.



JOIN THE TEAM

With a new club season comes a new push to get more people involved in helping to run the club. We are always looking for volunteers to serve on the board or committees. Remember, this club is only as good as we make it. If you would like to help out or simply learn more contact a committee Chairperson or any club officer.

POT LUCK SLIDE SHOW

By Lou Secki

As usual we will be putting together a slide show of member's images to be shown at the second meeting in december. This year we are going to be showcasing images from meetups and club activities. If you attended any of these please submit a few images to share with the club. We'd also like to solicit any images that fit the topic from our recent programs. We've had two already this year, one on macro photography and another one on telephoto bird photography, and we have one more coming up on street photography. Please include any images which fit these topics and keep in mind these photos don't need to be recent.

Please send images to the ccc.images@gmail.com address by December 5, 2014 with the subject line "Pot Luck Slideshow." No need to worry about naming these files any special way. If you have any questions please let me know by e-mail at lou.secki@gmail.com.

TIDBITS #91: ~~HISTOGRAMS~~ UNDERSTANDING EXPOSURE

By Archie Stone

In looking over my tidbits I find that this is the fourth time I will be writing on the subject of histograms. Actually, a better statement is we will be looking at getting the best exposure for the scene using the histogram. Why four times, well actually three as I am using and modifying a previous Tidbits. Two reasons, the first is that the histogram is one of the most important tools in digital photography and the digital camera. Second our January 7 meeting will be a photo hi jinx with the scenes set up to give you the extremes of exposure.

What is a histogram and why do we even need it?

A histogram is a simple bar graph representation of the exposure of a unique digital image captured by the camera sensor. It records the data as a tonality (black and white) or color brightness (color image). Tonality is simple to understand, just think of Ansel Adams' "Zone System" of ten shades starting with pure black on the left and pure white on the right and eight gradations of black, gray and white in the middle. The only difference is the sensor captures hundreds or thousands of different shades of blacks, grays and whites. Color Brightness on the other hand is a little harder to understand. It is not the color itself, but how saturated the color is. Let's take red as an example. We can have a deep dark red which will record as a dark color brightness on the left of the histogram. If dark and saturated enough it may well record the same as dark black. Or, we can have a light almost white washed out pastel red which will record as a very light tonality on the right of the histogram, the same as some whites may record. Both are red but due to how saturated or unsaturated the color is they record on different parts of the histogram. The rest of the reds will then fall in between.

The histogram you see on the camera is from a JPEG image, as is the image on the LCD screen. This is true even if you are shooting in RAW. This JPEG image is generated using the settings, including white balance, you have selected on your camera.

The X or vertical axis in the graph represents the number of pixels containing a given color brightness or tonality on the sensor. This is a representation as to show a true pixel count and the total tonalities would be physically impossible, as the average sensor today contains over 10 million pixels and captures hundreds to thousands of different tones. What can be said is that the columns are a ratio so that a color brightness found in 1000 pixels will be ten times higher than a color brightness found in 100 pixels. As the X axis is only a count of pixels we do not need to worry if it extends up to the top of the graph, and in fact, if there

SCRANTON LIBRARY NOTICE

Receiving Photos: Saturday, November 29, 2014 12:00 - 2:00 pm.

Reception: **Thursday, December 4, 2014 6:30-8:00 pm (come early for setup)**

Pickup Photos: Saturday, December 27, 2014 9:00am - 5:00pm.

- Five (5) photos allowed per entrant, with only three (3) in the general category.
- CCC exhibit rules and entry tags are on the website for downloading.
- Pictures must be ready to hang, in frames with glass – Wires only (no loops or hooks) Without wires, they cannot be hung!!
- Please, no damaged glass or frames.
- No photos accepted after 2:00pm, without prior arrangement with Mark Janke.
- Entry tags must be taped to front and back of photos.

More information can found at <http://www.coastalcameraclub.org/exhibits.html> and exhibit tags can be found at <http://www.coastalcameraclub.org/uploads/1/0/8/8/10881586/exhibittags2.pdf>.

Please do not pick up photos prior to December 27, 2014. (If you're not going to be available on that date, make arrangements with Mark Janke to have your images picked up)

Scranton Library
801 Boston Post Road
Madison CT 06443
203-245-7365

Please Note: Neither the Scranton Library, Mark Janke, the Coastal Camera Club, nor its agents assume responsibility for loss or damage to any image during the handling, judging or duration of this exhibit.

TIDBITS #91 CONTINUED

are numerous pixels containing the same tonality they are cut off at the top so even the ratios may not be fairly represented.

The Y or horizontal axis is the most important and is divided into 256 columns each representing a tonality. These columns are numbered 0 through 255 with 0 on the left of the graph representing black with no detail and 255 on the right representing white with no detail. Mid tone or 18% grey is at the center of the graph in position number 128. Unlike the X axis where we do not care if the line goes up to the top of the graph we do have to worry about the Y axis hitting the left and right edges.

For those into trivia, why 256 columns on the Y axis, because an 8 bit JPEG file has 256 tonalities. More trivia and the reason to shoot in RAW, a 12 bit RAW file has 4,096, a 14 bit has 16,384 and a 16 bit has 65,536 tonalities, which gives you more data to manipulate before you will see degradation in an image.

If the pixel columns (X value) are all the way to the left of the graph on the Y axis and “climb the wall” then we are capturing black that either has no detail or is so under exposed there was no detail captured by the sensor and therefore nothing to use in projecting the image or to bring out in making the print. The same can be said for a histogram where the pixel columns extend all the way to the right edge of the Y axis and “climb the wall” as that portion of the image either has not detail or will be so over exposed as to contain no detail and therefore nothing to use in projecting the image or to bring out in making the print.

Is “climbing the wall necessarily bad? That depends on the image you are trying to capture. If the scene does contain blacks or whites that are so black or so white as to contain no detail, then a correct exposure may give a histogram with the Y axis “climbing the wall”. What can be said is that if you do have a

2014-2015 MEMBER'S PROJECT

The members' project for the year is Song Titles. Your assignment is to make an image to go with each title. In the Spring of 2015 we will create a slide show of your results accompanied by the songs on the list. This will work best if we get a lot of members to participate! So please join in the fun!!! In the event there are too few images of some titles to make a decent slideshow, we may ask you for 2 per title so if you find a second shot you like, save it too. Your goal is to cover the entire list but if you only do a few it's better than not participating at all. You can listen to short clips of each one at the MP3 store on Amazon.com, but some should be familiar to you.

TIDBITS #91 CONT'D

histogram "climbing the wall" on the left or right you will then have a print with black or white with no detail.

The histogram gives us a representation of the exposure of an image as captured by the sensor. It is then up to the photographer to decide, given the image, whether this is a proper exposure or not. The histogram will allow the photographer to fine tune the exposure or to give a bias to over or under exposure.

A histogram without the image to compare it too is of no use to the photographer. Why is this true? If you are photographing the inside of the black hood worn by the nasty witch you will have a histogram that will fall for the most part to the left of mid tone and will also have the Y axis "climbing the wall" on the left. This is because some of the image will be black with no detail and the rest of the image will be shades of black and dark gray but contain detail. Conversely if you are photographing Snow White's, white gown the photographer will have a histogram that will fall for the most part to the right of mid tone and will also have the Y axis "climbing the wall" on the right. This is because some of the image will be white with no detail and the rest of the image will be shades of white and light gray but contain detail. If you saw the two histograms without the image you may think that one was from an under exposed subject and the other from an over exposed subject.

When photographing in JPEG mode, you need to capture the image as given or how you want it to be projected or printed. This is because the image is processed (developed) in camera. If the scene you are capturing is average, or contains an equal amount of blacks (darks) and whites (lights) you should try and center the histogram in the middle of the Y axis of the graph. If a scene is contrasty then you may want to favor adjusting the exposure towards the white end of the graph without climbing the right wall. This will give you as much detail in the blacks as possible, but not blow out the whites. Remember though when

Song Title	Composer/ Artist
Alone	Kenny G
America	Simon and Garfunkel
Beautiful	Christina Aguilera
Blue	Joni Mitchell
Broken	Tift Merritt
Drive My Car	The Beatles
Every Ship Must Sail Away	Blue Merle
Harbor Lights	Bruce Hornsby
Have You Ever Seen The Rain	Credence Clearwater Revival
Here Comes The Sun	The Beatles
Lady Madonna	The Beatles
Lookin' Out My Backdoor	Credence Clearwater Revival
Macho Man	The Village People
Maple Leaf Rag	Scott Joplin
Past In The Present	Joshua Redman
Stairway To Heaven	Led Zeppelin
Summertime	George Gershwin
Take Me To The River	The Talking Heads
The Long And Winding Road	The Beatles
Up Jumped Spring	Arturo Sandoval
Water And Stone	Catie Curtis
Young At Heart	Frank Sinatra

TIDBITS #91, CONT'D

shooting in JPEG you need to favor the whites and have detail as we are willing to accept black with no detail, such as dark shadows, but do not like to see images with blown out whites.

When shooting in RAW you need to move the histogram as far to the right as you can, given the image, without climbing the right wall so as to gather as much detail as possible in the blacks. You do this as all of the image processing is done on the computer and you need as much data as possible through out the image to work with. The second reason has to do with the way digital captures and image. The majority of the tonalities are located to the right of the midtone center, so by favoring the right side we capture more data.

The histogram can also be used to check Dynamic Range, or the ability of the sensor to capture all of the data in the image. Digital cameras have a Dynamic Range that now exceeds slide and print film. Most articles I have read give the Dynamic Range of a low end camera at about 7 or 8 stops of light and a high end camera capturing 11 or greater stops of light.

If the histogram covers the full range of the graph without "climbing the wall" at either end then the sensors' dynamic range was great enough to capture the image with no loss of detail. If though, the histogram covers the full range of the Y axis of the graph and climbs the left and right wall, then the dynamic range of the sensor is not enough to cover the contrast range of the image and you will have areas of black and white that contain no detail. You then have two choices, one to mount your camera on a tripod, and using High Dynamic Range technique take a series of images, starting with over exposing the highlights which will bring the darks and shadows into the dynamic range of the sensor and then changing the exposure towards under exposure until you have brought the highlights inside the dynamic range. Then using HDR software, merge the images on the computer. Or! You reach into the camera bag and grab the split neutral density filter and use it to bring the contrast range back into what the sensor's Dynamic Range can capture. You now have a third choose as the newer cameras have in camera HDR capture.

The histogram will tell you if you have a high contrast or low contrast image. A high contrast image will be spread out over the full length or most of the length of the Y axis. A low contrast image will be bunched together on the Y axis leaving room at one or both ends. If it is biased to the left, black end of the graph, then you have a Low Key or under exposed image. If it is biased to the right, white end of the graph, then you have a high key or over exposed image. It is up to the photographer to decide, by looking at the scene you just photographed or the image on the LCD panel, which it is. If it is under or over exposure then adjust the camera settings and try again. I use this to fine tune my exposures or to bracket the exposure so that when I get it on the computer I have a number of slightly different exposures to choose from.

Most digital cameras have a histogram. You can find out how to bring it up on the LCD screen by reading the histogram section of your camera manual. The camera will also give you the choice of a "luminous" histogram or a Red, Green, Blue histogram. The luminous histogram is a weighted average of the RGB pixels and is usually depicted as black on the bar graph. The RGB histogram shows the distribution of each color either as three separate graphs or one graph with the colors overlaying each other. While the RGB histogram gives a more accurate exposure reading I find that in the field, it is too much information so I have my cameras set to the luminous histogram. In processing the images on the computer though, I would use the RGB histogram.

If you find you are constantly correcting your exposure in the same direction and by the same amount you may have a metering problem. I had this on my Canon G5 point and shoot and solved the over exposure problem by permanently setting a 1/3rd stop under exposure using my exposure compensation setting. To make this determination I used my histogram to shoot a sequence of images starting at 2/3rd under exposed up to 2/3rd over exposure in 1/3rd stops. After viewing the images on the computer I determined that I liked the exposure I was getting from the 1/3rd stop under exposure best.

TIDBITS #91, CON'T

While this article will get you started on the right track in using your histogram you will need to practice reading the graph while looking at the image in order to make it work.

More readings

www.dpreview.com/glossary look up histogram

www.digitaldarrell.com/Article-UnderstandingYourDigitalCameraHistogram.asp

www.google.com search topic "articles on digital camera histogram"

www.lexar.com has a list of free tutorials

HIJINX MEETING

Our January 7 meeting will be an exposure hi jinx. What is a hi jinx you ask, well I'll tell you. It is a still life or table top photo shoot set up in the café. In this case the set ups will be to let you see and shoot scenes of various exposures. We will have a dark scene, mostly recording to the left of midtone on the histogram and a white or bright set up mostly recording to the right. We will also try and have some that are stacked in the middle and some general scenes.

What you need to do is to bring your camera, lenses and tripod. Don't forget the memory card and battery and if you have one a remote shutter release. If you don't have a tripod we will have some you can use. You should also be familiar with how to bring up your histogram. If you have live view or a mirror-less camera with an electronic viewfinder you should be able to see the histogram of the scene in the viewfinder or on the LCD before you take the picture. If you have a DSLR or camera without live view you will not see the histogram until after taking the picture.

We will have enough set ups so that all can shoot at the same time.

VIEW FROM THE BOARD, CONT'D

hand, if you are devastated with losing, and are open to improving your photography by receiving constructive criticism, then I believe you will benefit from competitions. I did not compete the first few years I was in the club because I did not think my images were good enough. I entered only after seeking the assistance from other club members, and I did win a couple of awards the first time out. Over the years I have experienced my share of losing, but I have not let the disappointment discourage me. I have tried to benefit from the critiques and feedback in order to improve on my photography. Competitions are most useful when you seek out critiques and ask specific questions about your images... You may not always agree with the critiques, and if you are satisfied with your photography, that maybe good enough, but in my opinion, you will only become a better photographer when you learn from the past. I have gone to the extent of reprocessing a losing photo, entered it in another competition and won an award.

Judging photography is different than judging a sporting event. We all know that referees and umpires make mistakes, but they are working from the same standards. Judging photography is more subjective, but in the long term the judges attend to be more right than wrong. Typically, club judges look for strong composition (the subject should not be dead center), the right exposure, true colors, a tack sharp image, and the picture needs to hold your interest. My experience is that nature photography is the most favored

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VIEW FROM THE BOARD, CONT'D

category in camera clubs. However, if you are going to compete in shows outside of the club such as Images, Mystic or shows in Hartford, their judges tend to favor works that are either considered unique in subject matter, style, technique, composition or successfully drive home a point of view. These judges may ignore the stricter technical approach favored by club judges and therefore may occasionally leave club members scratching their heads. The judges in these competitions are less likely to favor images of animals or common subjects like light houses, barns or sail boats. They favor images they believe are more in the fine art category. I have never seen a definition of fine art photography that makes sense to me, but images designated as fine art usually emote strong emotions and have a great deal of impact.

It is easy to criticize the judging of photography. However, just don't use that as an excuse to not compete. Yes, judging can be subjective. My advice is suck it up, get over it and move on. Life is not always fair and that also applies to photography competitions. Find out why your losers lost, and why your winners won. Ask questions and learn from the opportunity. It is also true that wining and losing depends on the competitors that particular day. You may have a wining photo but loose because someone else had a great one, and your might win another day against other competitors. I have found that over time, and in an array of competitions, good photographers will do better than poor ones. The best photographers learn by competing. Don't think you have to have the newest high end equipment, and also have marvelous editing skills to win. I know of a photographer that uses an inexpensive point- and- shoot, and he does no editing. He has been juried into Images show three years in a row. One year winning an award.

Bottom line is you compete in every facet of life and photography competition is like the old adage about love; you are better off losing than never competing at all. Competition can be agonizing, but you are really going to love the ecstasy and recognition when you win an award. As they say about the lottery, you have to be in it to win it. Good luck!

UPCOMING SENIOR CENTER HANGING

There will be another change to hang you images in the Madison Senior Center coming in the Spring of 2015. Dates for this hanging are March 2, 2015 - April 13, 2015. If you would like the opportunity to hang your work please let Archie know and he will put you on the list. Priority is given to those members who have not hung before or recently and are on a first come first served basis. Please send an email to Archie (dine_rock@snet.net) and he add you to the list and let you know logistics of the hanging as we get closer.