

Polk County Camera Club Newsletter

March-April



© Bonnie Shedd

Nuremberg

Congratulations Bonnie Shedd!

This image won the Second Place at the Strawberry Festival Photo Contest

In this Issue

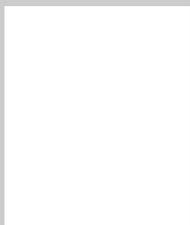
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Welcome to the Polk County Camera Club

March-April 2004

From the Editor



Welcome Our Newsletter

I would like to unveil our first newsletter and at the same time, invite you to be an active contributor. Our main objective is to share our work, experiences, and knowledge in photography. The newsletter will help many of you learn new techniques while giving others the opportunity to show their work and knowledge. I'm hoping that it will help those who are just starting as well as the more experienced photographers in our club. Those of you that are talented at reporting and writing, this is your chance to shine. The newsletter is scheduled to be published bimonthly; this will allow time for image and article submissions.

R.Munguia

Beating the Light text and photos by R.Munguia

It's been almost two years since our trip to the American Southwest. In a two week period, we traveled over 4,000 miles, refueled over 12 times, and visited 9 national parks. In that short time, we were able to accomplish many things, including bringing back home all those memories of the beauty of the National Parks. We camped under the stars, walked the trails, cooked fresh trout, but best of all- we enjoyed our family time.

Waking up at first light from our tent, pitched at the foot of Skylight Arch, was one of those priceless experiences. But the one that almost cost me the life was racing the light at Delicate Arch. It was a summer evening when I decided I was going to take the challenge of walking one mile uphill to get to see the most amazing light experience. Those of you that have seen this natural display know what I mean. It was close to 8:00pm when I started climbing, and knowing I was running late, I decided to double the pace. Half the way uphill, my heart was just skipping the beat and soon after, my vision went black. Not enough oxygen on your brain can cause that, so I took a minute to catch my breath, and continue my race.

I made it all the way to the top on time and

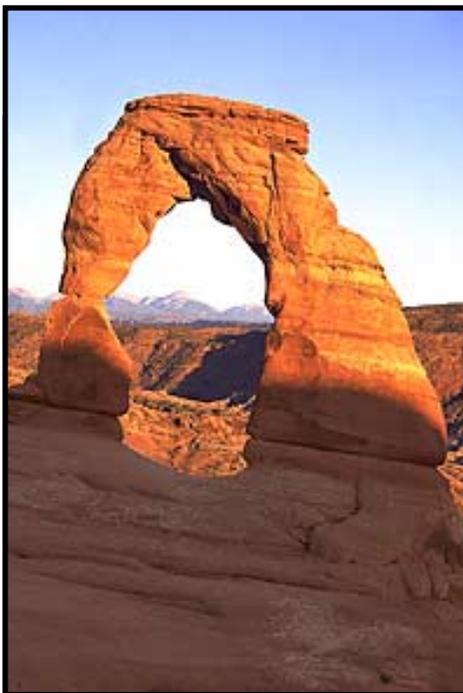
as expected, there were over a hundred people sitting on the edge of this natural wonder, just waiting for the right time. Something similar to what happens in Key

West every day at sunset. Obviously, I wasn't the only one with a camera, but only one of the few with a tripod. The time arrived, and the shadows started to move towards the arch. In a matter of minutes, it went from the glowing light to the deepest shadows. Soon, the show was over, and the trip back down became a real challenge as most of the light was gone.

In two weeks, we traveled three states, so timing was an issue, as we could only shoot early in the morning and late in the afternoon to get the best colors. Here's the trick, first we spent several months doing research. Before we left, we had maps of all the

National Parks, and the places we wanted to visit. Then, we calculated our average driving time for each of the locations and the number of days we could spend on each. We knew for sure that we wanted to spend at least a couple of days in Grand Canyon.

We traveled with backpacks full of camping gear and photo equipment. Over fifty rolls of 35mm and ten of 120mm, all shot within two weeks. We traveled at night and during noon time, when the light wasn't good for photography. Most of the photography was taken using a wide angle between 19mm-35mm on Velvia 50. Velvia is my choice of film for landscape



*Delicate Arch,
Arches National Park, Utah
Maxxum 800si, Tokina 19-35mm f3.5
Velvia 50*

photography, as it has the finest grain and resolution in the market. Using this film was a real advantage when scanning the images to have them printed on our inkjet. The fine details and saturated colors were captured with great accuracy. Shooting with ISO 50, it's a challenge by itself when shooting in late or early light. The slower speed required extremely slow shutter speeds, especially when the lens was stopped down to $f22$, meaning that hand holding the camera was out of the question.

I normally shoot landscapes in late or early light, when the sun is close to the horizon providing me a warm light, full of color saturation. We



*Canyonlands NP, Utah
Maxxum 800si, Velvia 50*

an hour early at my shooting location. It is time to sit down and enjoy the magical effect of the light interacting with the landscape.

At the end of our trip, we boarded the plane bound to Miami, reflecting on the many things we saw in two



*Kaibab Trail, Grand Canyon NP, Arizona
Maxxum 800si, Velvia 50*

managed to wake up early in the morning, and walked to our shooting spot, come back two hours later to pick up the camping gear, and head out to our next destination, hoping to make it on time for sunset shooting.

I don't believe on using filters to enhance colors on my pictures or create special effects. I let nature take its course, and allow time to make it happen. Many times, I found myself

weeks. From the mountains of Red Pass, Colorado; to the saguaros in Arizona and the rock formations of the Arches NP; all this done in two weeks sounded kind of crazy, but exciting. We knew we didn't get to see it all, but we were happy to come back home with hundreds of photos to show our friends, and remind us of our great adventures beating the light. -RMC

Is Film Photography Really Dead? By R.Munguía

It seems to me that the rumors are running out of control. Would it be possible that a company such as Kodak or Fuji stop their film production to concentrate on the digital market? They might cut some of the film product lines, but what about their international market? Film's still used all over the world, and if they decide to close down film production, there will be other companies interested on getting the business.

Since I went digital two years ago, I haven't stop shooting film. When you own conventional cameras in various formats (4x5, 6x7, 6x6), it's hard to forget film. From time to time, I put a slide page on the light-box to select an image for scanning, and my mind goes back to the days where exposure was a serious issue. Digital makes it a little easier with its exposure curves; now you can underexpose by 3 stops with no problem. The exposure latitude on my favorite film Velvia 50, allowed me only 1/2 stop underexposure before my shadows began to suffer. The same for the highlights; you really needed to expose your film correctly.

But the fact is that digital capture provides the photographer with more dynamic range than what can be obtained from a slide using a hi-end scanner. On the other hand, most photo stock companies are still accepting slides rather than digital shots, as they can obtain larger file sizes from scanning a transparency. So this whole issue trickles down to convenience. Why not using both, film and digital? Let's stop being lazy photographers, leaving everything to be fixed later in Photoshop. Why not doing what really teaches you about exposure and photography; shoot film, transparency film.

Minolta-Best Digital Camera?

Although a little late in the Digital SLR competition, Minolta announced their new digital product the Maxxum 7 Digital expected to be in the market in fall 2004. This new revolutionary Digital SLR has a unique feature, that is really interesting and only found on a previous consumer product from the company. The camera has an anti-shake system (image stabilization) built in to the 6.1MP CCD sensor. This means no more need for VR (vibration reduction) or IS (image stabilization) lenses, systems that were developed

Minolta has not announced any prices, yet; I guess, we'll have to wait until it hits the market this fall. In the meantime, here are some features and photos from Minolta Europe website.-RMC



The Maxxum 7 Digital comes with a wide 2" LCD.



Looks like an interesting package, but it's still too early to tell.

- Digital SLR based on Maxxum 7 / Dynax 7
- Six megapixel APS sized CCD
- Body integrated anti-shake, works with all lenses ***
- White balance control button on rear of camera
- ISO control button on rear of camera
- Selectable AF modes (nine point AF)
- Left dial exposure (-3 to +3 EV) and flash compensation (-2 to +2 EV)
- Right dial exposure mode and drive mode
- Dual command dials front and rear of camera
- 14-Segment honeycomb-pattern metering
- ADI and Wireless flash support
- AF/MF button
- External PC Sync flash terminal
- Three user memories
- Large 2.0" LCD Monitor
- Eye-start viewfinder proximity sensor (power on)

Available Fall 2004

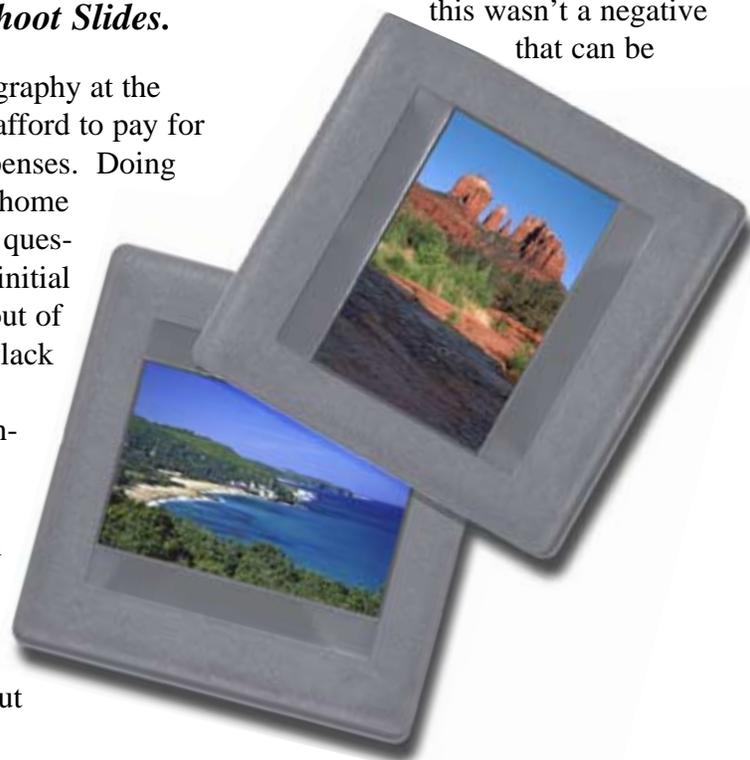
on some hi-end lenses from Nikon and Canon, respectively. With the Maxxum 7 Digital, any lens will perform as an image stabilized lens.

No more need to pay high prices to afford an image stabilized lens. Also in this camera, you'll find Minolta's legendary 14-segment honeycomb metering system and a nine points autofocus system. Also it comes with a wide 2" inch LCD for menus and image previews. While the camera is currently under development, there are many more tests to run on such a new and innovative design. In theory, this should be a great camera, but until we get more details from Minolta, it seems that most of these are just speculations. I haven't found any information on buffer sizes, capture speeds, or media compatibility.

never thought I could do my own processing at home. Kodachrome required a special process, PK-14 from Kodak, so it was out of reach for the home-based lab. Then, I read about E-6 transparency film, and soon I found myself shooting slides. Taking my film to the local lab for E-6 processing wasn't the best way to go. Several times, I got my slides with color cast, and even scratched from the drying rack. On top of all that, I was paying \$8.00 per roll. Then, I found the Kodak E-6 Hobby Pack Kit, an inexpensive kit that allowed me to process up to 8 rolls of slides for less than \$25.00. It didn't take me too much time to get my setup running for E-6. All I needed was a large container to create a water bath, and five 16-ounce containers to keep the chemistry. There's nothing better than being able to shoot a roll of slides and have it processed within an hour at home. Since that day, I knew that my future in photography would depend on how good I could get shooting slides. I continued to process all my slides, for the satisfaction and the quality I was able to achieve. Over the years, I learned that when exposing slide film, you really need to do it right; this wasn't a negative that can be

Why I Chose to Shoot Slides.

When I started photography at the age of 16, I couldn't afford to pay for all the processing expenses. Doing color photography at home was totally out of the question as it required an initial investment that was out of reach for me. Even black & white photography proved to be an expensive hobby. At the time, I spent a lot of time reading books in search of answers and learning new techniques. I knew about positive film, but



fixed when printing. The ability to see exactly what you shoot makes slide film the best way to learn.

There's no way that by looking at a negative you can tell if the exposure is perfect or there's no color cast on the picture that you took. The reason is obvious, you're looking at a negative. With the slide, you see any exposure mistakes or color shift right on the film. If you don't do it right, simply you don't get it right. On negative film, your colors and exposure depend on the operator behind the printing machine. I worked as a photo lab technician, and trust me, you can do wonders with a badly exposed negative, but don't try that with slides. Slide film is less tolerant to exposure mistakes, and even a 1/2 stop over exposure can make your highlights too hot. Shooting slides will definitely turn you into a better photographer. You can ask all the good photographers out there, and they will all agree that slides are the best way to learn.

I was so interested in shooting slides, that I started to roll my own rolls. Slide film as well as negative film can be purchased in bulk. The rolls are 100' long and you can roll them into the film cartridge using a special daylight bulk loader. I still do that, even though I shoot mostly digital now. Sometimes I feel shooting slides is better for a particular situation. Making your own rolls saves you a lot of money plus it's fun. I have tried almost all slide formats and brands. But for most of my work I have relied on Fujichrome Velvia and Provia, as they provide me with high resolution, and the color saturation required for my commercial photography.

For those of you just starting, consider slide film if you really want to learn how to make a better exposure. If you learn to shoot slides, you can shoot anything. -RMC

Springtime for Nature By *R.Munguía*



*Great Egret mating display,
Gatorland, Orlando.*

Spring is here and love is in the air. Those of you that love nature, now it's the best time to head outside and get some shots. Flowers are blooming all over, and the birds have their breeding colors- what a treat. On a recent trip to Kissimmee SP, Bonnie Shedd and I had our chances at several bird species including Scrub Jays and Towhees. We also visited Gatorland in Orlando, where many egrets and herons built their nests and displayed their feathers. Right around Lakeland, we have so many places to get in touch with nature.

When shooting nature, it's recommended to leave early and take advantage of the soft and warm light available during the first three hours after dawn. or before sunset. This light create a warm feel on your photos, and avoids the harsh light and contrast associated with shooting when the sun is too high. Another advantage of shooting early, you

don't have to suffer the extreme heat. Flowers are everywhere, so pack and go drive around the countryside and check the flowers growing on the side of the roads. Visit your State Parks or County Parks, there are many subjects waiting to be photographed. This time of the year, I go to Maykka SP in search of flowers and insects, and the occasional Sandhill crane babies. A lot of



Baby Sandhill Crane, Lake Wales.

babies, out there!

Places to visit during this time of the year include: Lake Morton, Lake Hollingsworth, Myakka SP, Hillborough River SP, Kissimmee SP, Honeymoon Is. SP, the Venice Rookery, Gatorland, and Fort DeSoto. If interested on joining some of our trips, send an email to rmung@wildstockphotos.com.

But, don't delay, spring is short. Go out and shoot some nature photography before it gets too hot. -RMC