

Polk County Camera Club

Newsletter

May-June



© Bob Finley

Sunflower

Bob Finley captured this beautiful sunflower against a deep blue sky creating an effective image that makes good use of color contrast. He used Kodachrome slide film.

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Welcome to the Polk County Camera Club

May-June 2004

Shooting Location: Fort DeSoto *Text & Photos ©R.Munguia & Bonnie Shedd*

For those of you wondering where to go on your photo trips, take my advice and visit Fort DeSoto. This is one of the top locations for many bird photographers from around the world. Fort DeSoto is a County Beach Park operated by the Pinellas County Government, situated at the southern tip of the city of St. Petersburg, just before the Skyway Bridge. This park offers endless opportunities for the avid photographer.

This month I led a photo trip to this location in search of birds and wildlife. As soon as I drove in the park, I went to one of the best bird shooting locations, the water fountain east of the south fishing pier. There, we were rewarded by an extremely cooperative mockingbird, that didn't seem affected by our presence. This freshwater fountain is like a magnet for birds. Since the park is surrounded by salt water, they come to this place to replenish their fluids. Soon after we arrived, I spotted a pair of raccoons eating berries while hanging from a fig tree. As we were heading back to the car to continue our trip we came across some Scarlet Tanagers, a beautiful red and black bird not easy to find in Florida.

Few minutes later, we reached the North Beach, possibly the best area to get awesome photos of shorebirds and wading birds. The first bird we encountered was a Roseate Spoonbill on the shallow pools, and we all had our chances at this cooper-



Raccoon at Fort DeSoto
Nikon D1
©Bonnie Shedd

ative subject. First, we worked out from a distance, then we decided to move in closer. Some of us tried our luck at some Black Skimmers that were resting on the mud flats, while others paid more attention to the courtship displays of terns and gulls on the beach side.

When coming to Fort DeSoto, it's a good idea to bring some clothes and shoes that can get wet and muddy as the best photos are achieved from the mud flats, and even while wading in the shallow waters. A tripod is essential as it allows you to rest your arms while stalking birds, and a backpack-type camera bag will be really useful to keep you gear handy as well as dried. Since the backpack sits on your back, you'll be able to rest your body on the sand, and move while carrying

your gear on your back. Also, working at eye level with these birds creates more impact while reducing the effect of any distracting

background. When approaching resting birds, make sure you approach them slowly, and in several short moves rather than one continuous motion towards your subject. It's a good idea to zig-zag your way to the birds instead of walking in a straight line. Take your time and pretend you have no interest on your subjects. Keep your eyes

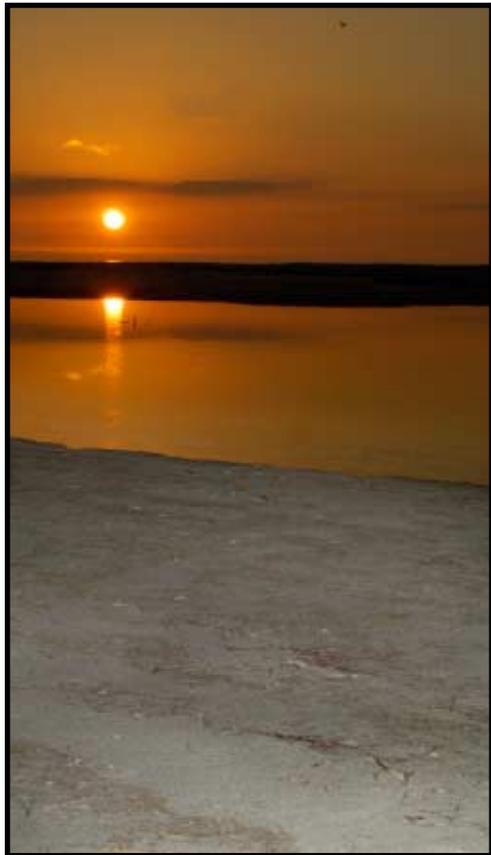


Roseate Spoonbill foraging on the shallow pools on North Beach.
Nikon D100, Sigma 50-500mm
©R.Munguia

away from the subject until you're ready to shoot at a good working distance. Occasionally, it's better to sit and wait for feeding birds to move your way. Once you set yourself in a good place, stay motionless for few min-

utes. Soon, the feeding birds will ignore your presence and lose their fear. You'll be rewarded with amazingly close opportunities to shoot these birds.

But Fort DeSoto offers a lot more to photograph. On the East Beach, you can try your luck at some amazing shots of the Sunshine Skyway at sunrise or beautiful sunsets on the North Beach and the Piers. Also, you can take a day trip to Egmont Key, another



*Sunset from North Beach
Nikon D100, Tokina 19-35mm
Sunpak 5000 Flash*

er popular area for birding. Next time you're in the area, make sure you stop by. Many photo opportunities are available throughout this park. I normally visit this location at least twice a month, if you're interested in joining, send me an email at:

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Foil Reflectors-the cheap alternative.

Text & Photos ©R.Munguia

Getting well lit close-up photos can be a real challenge. That's why many photographers rely on multiple

bounce enough light back to your subject. Even better, one side of the foil is dull while the other is extremely shiny. You can take a piece of cardboard and use fixing spray such as 3M or any spray glue, and then paste a piece of foil over the cardboard. You can even create a little texture to the foil if you want to create a diffused type of light reflector.



Both of this photos were taken using sunlight as the main light. I used a foil reflector to increase the light on the shadow area of this flowering grass (Right).

flash setups when doing macro photography. Well, multiple flash setups can be expensive and complicated. Don't panic, there are many ways in which we can enhanced the light that hits the subject. I have used for many years a simple technique, that proves to be effective and inexpensive. You don't even have to leave your house to find the materials you'll need.

One of the easiest ways to reflect some light back to your subject is using a mirror. Small-sized mirrors can be used to direct some light to the inside of a flower that otherwise would have come out too dark. But mirrors can be hard to control and they are too fragile to carry in my backpack with all the other gear. Solution: tin foil and cardboard. Cardboard is extremely flexible and can be cut in all kinds of shapes, sizes and even be fold. Tin foil is a highly reflective surface that will

For larger subjects, I have used the type of light deflector used inside cars. The kind you put over the dash to keep the heat out.

They just work wonders and when compared to professional products, they can't be any cheaper. You can even try gold-foil from a craft store to create a golden light instead.



The technique to use them is really simple. Just aim the reflector from the opposite side of the light source towards your subject. Practice, and move the reflector around until you get the desired effect. Instead of buying expensive flash equipment, give this a try. This technique produces more natural light than flash, it's easier to control, and it will save you a bundle. -RMC

Playing with Lights at Night.

Text & Photos ©R.Munguia



*Restaurant Sign
(Palm Beach International Airport)*

This image was created by zooming out on this restaurant sign on a three second exposure @ f22. The image was focused and composed at 80mm, at the end of the exposure the lens was at 35mm.

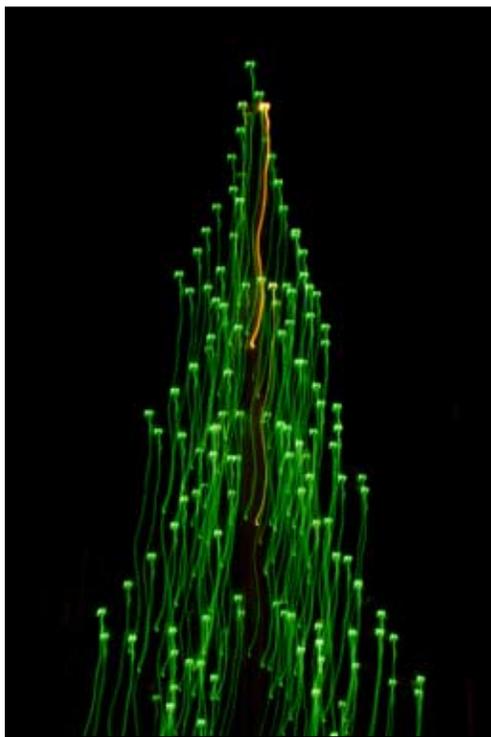
Shooting lights at night can be a real adventure with endless possibilities. Using slow shutter speeds and some camera movements, you can create interesting effects. More amazingly, if you try the same subject several times, you'll never get the same image. I recommend to use a tripod to help you compose and practice your camera movements before you make the exposure. Careful planning is the key to successful night photography. Anything can be used as a subject, from the trailing lights of an airplane taking off to Christmas lights on a tree. The possibilities are

endless. Different effects can be achieved by simple camera movements, or by zooming the lens.



Lightspeed - Simple image made by panning from left to right in a quick 1 sec. exposure at f16

Usually, it's best to stop down the lens between f8 and f11 and then adjust the shutter speed to exposed for the highlights. If after doing so your shutter speed is too short to allow for the desired effect, then you can stop down the lens as much as required to obtain the long shutter speed you need. Panning photos are best done using a tripod, this way you can lock one axis (tilt or pan) and work on the other. Slow film does better for this kind of photography, as it requires more time to expose; leaving you with plenty of time to use your creativity. The combination of lights and camera movements is so unpredictable that you won't find two shots that look the same. Try combining a long exposure with a flash exposure to create a sense of time and motion. Go out and shoot some lights, it's fun and creative. -RMC



Christmas Tree. This image was created while panning vertically from the bottom to the top.

Affordable Macro

Text & Photos ©R.Munguia

Macro lenses are usually among the most expensive lenses competing in price with many moderate zooms and wide-angles. What makes them so expensive is the number of elements used in this lenses to provide short focusing distances and high magnification ratios. The first time you pick a macro lens with a 1:1 magnification ratio, you'll notice the significant weight when compared to a normal lens.



With the Sigma 105mm f2.8, you can go deep in the world of macro photography, without sacrificing your wallet. At a price of around \$300.00, this lens beats any competition on the first try. The quality of this lens is unbelievable, and the high magnification ratio of 1:1 is more than most of us will ever use. This lens incorporates an all-metal construction with Sigma's latest EX finish. The 105mm Macro delivers super sharp and distortion free images throughout its focusing range. Better yet, it makes an outstanding portrait lens with its wide f2.8 aperture. A great lens with an even better feature, a low price tag.



Best price found at:
www.hotbuysselectronics.com

Photoshop® to the Rescue

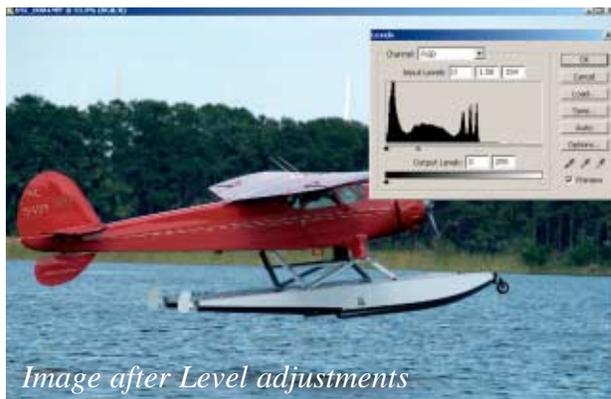
Text & Photos ©R.Munguia



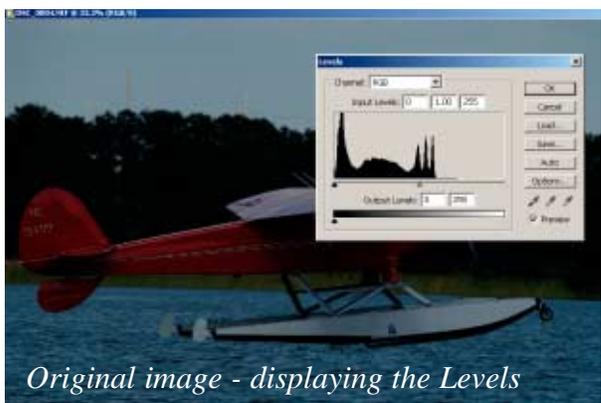
This process is also known as opening the shadows.

Now your image starts to look better thanks to a quick adjustment of the Levels. Underexposed images also contain some kind of color shift, due to the improper exposure. In the case of this airplane, we have a cyan tint that needs to be fixed. To work on that, you can use the Selective Color

What happens when you come back from a photo session to find that you have underexposed your favorite shot. Simple, back in the old days, there wasn't much you could do. There were no scanners or Photoshop for that matter. Today, the light is brighter and even on those bad days, there will be light at the end of the tunnel.



Let's start by opening our digital file or scan. The first thing you should do is check your Levels or histogram (Image/Adjustments/Levels).



menu (Image/Adjustments/ Selective Color). Select the neutrals from the color drop-down menu and add a little yellow by moving the yellow slider to the right. You can also move the cyan slider a little to the left. To correct the cyan tint, I used +8% yellow and -5% cyan. Always adjust the Levels first, before doing any other manipulation. Obviously nothing beats a well exposed image, but when in trouble, it's good to know you can probably save it in

Note that the image contains a lot of information in the shadows and almost nothing on the highlights. All the tonal values are distributed on the left side of the histogram. Next, click and drag the highlight slider on the histogram towards the left until it hits the first area of information. Now move the midtone slider to the left until your image improves the tonal value on the midtones and shadows.

Photoshop®-RMC



Here's the final image after some Photoshop work.

Calling All Members



As part of our plan to improve our club, we have come out with few activities to keep you busy during summer. These activities include a series of workshops and photo outings to be discussed in our upcoming meetings. The purpose is to keep you shooting during those months that we don't meet. We have several different activities in which each of you will have the chance to learn something new. Workshops to be presented include:

Introduction to macro photography at Bok Towers.

Shooting Fireworks at Lake Mirror Night Photography

and much more.

Stay tuned for more information by visiting our website. All activities will be displayed on our website under the schedule section. Make sure you send us an email or call us to sign-in for any of the workshops listed. We want to make each one of these outings a learning experience for everyone. Don't miss this opportunity. For more info, visit our website:

www.wildstockphotos.com/cameraclub

or email us at:

cameraclub@wildstockphotos.com