THE IMAGE

View From the Boardroom

By Maryann Flick

"Article II Purpose: The purpose of the CCC shall be to foster the science and art of photography among the members and to develop the photographic skills of the members." (from the Coastal Camera Club constitution)

Most members probably have not read the club's constitution. Above is our stated purpose or mission if you will. It is the basis of my job as president and that of the Executive Board as well. How we are to go about it is described only very loosely in the by-laws of the club: "Educational and informative articles in the newsletter", meetings, "field trips designed to promote and enhance the photographic skill and knowledge of the members", exhibits. So we are tasked with coming up with ideas to entertain and educate the members.

I ask myself "What is a camera club?" I think it is a small community of photography enthusiasts who come together to share their knowledge and their work. We cheer each other on, while genially competing with one another. But like many communities, we are diverse in many ways: expertise, favorite subjects and subjective opinion about art. We welcome this diversity as a way to share ideas and a variety of images but it is what makes it difficult to engage 30+ people all the time, year after year. We wonder what went wrong when members do not rejoin or fail to attend meetings. We squeeze our brains to figure out how to help beginners while providing something of interest for experienced photographers. We worry about being biased toward certain programs and activities that might feel repetitious or hold little general interest. We try to summon our enthusiasm for photography even when we ourselves may be in the photography doldrums. And we pray that what we offer is helpful even though we are also amateurs in this art. Our job is not easy but we do care and we do try. And we look to the members to tell us what we are doing right, what we can do to improve the club and what isn't worth our efforts. We need both the new members and the old members to bring us fresh ideas. A club works best when everyone is involved.

HELP WANTED

The club is trying to fill one vacant position on the board.   If you are interested in helping to steer club activities and willing to take on a few tasks throughout the year, we would welcome your help. We have an immediate need for someone to chair the Activities Committee which promotes and organizes activity meetups. This should require only a small amount of time. Please contact Maryann or any board member if you can give us a hand.

"It's one thing to make a picture of what a person looks like; it's another thing to make a portrait of who they are." Paul Caponigro

OFFICERS
President
Maryann Flick   860-304-5693

Vice President
Paula Chabot   860-399-5414

Secretary
Sue Frechette   860-663-1372

Treasurer
Mike Frechette   860-663-1372

Past President
Archie Stone   203-245-2381

COMMITTEES
Exhibits
Allison Maltese   203-458-7916

Hospitality
Julianne Derken   203-318-0148

Membership
Dave Rathbun   203-484-2262

Newsletter
Sue Frechette   860-663-1372

Programs
Mark Janke   203-457-1890

Publicity
Colin Reeve   203-241-7949
Dawn Schieferdecker 860-526-5753

Digital Image Technology
Louis Secki   203-804-7479

Webmaster
Rob Nardino   203-318-0831

Activities—Open

2018 SPRING MEETING SCHEDULE

April 18, 2018—Jim Goodrich—Drone Photography

May 2, 2018—Gladeview Health Center Opening

May 16, 2018—40 Slide Review

June 6, 2018—CCC Annual Photo Project Presentation

June 20, 2018—Annual Meeting, Potluck Dinner

2018 SPRING EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

April 28, 2018—Gladeview Health Care Center Hang 12-2

May 2, 2018—Gladeview Reception

June 23, 2018—Gladeview Take Down

NECCC CONFERENCE 2018

The NECCC Photography Conference is being held in Amherst, MA from July 13th through the 15th. This is a great opportunity for photographers to spend a weekend immersed in photography lectures and workshops. Several CCC club members are attending. For more information and online registration, go to:

http://www.neccc.org/p/2018-conference.html

INSTRUCTION ON PRINTING

Recently Sue and Mike Frechette held an instructional session with one of our members which covered the ins and outs of printing from Adobe Lightroom. The session focused on aspect ratios and how to crop and size your print so that it fits in a standard mat. If you've been reluctant to enter your work in a print competition or exhibit because you are unsure of how to print your image, let us help you. We can schedule either a one-on-one session with you alone or, if there are several people with an interest, we can do a group session. Contact Mike and Sue at wfrprs@att.net.

MEETUPS

CCC is always looking for photo shoot opportunities. If you are planning to do a shoot somewhere, consider sending out an email to the club members and asking if anyone wants to accompany you.   Or, if you just have an idea for a shoot, let one of the board members know about it and maybe we can schedule it. Currently Allison Maltese has offered informal photo shoots at her Mom's property in Killingworth.   The property is full of woodland gardens, trails and a beautiful pond. Allison is at the property several times a week and every Sunday.   Just contact Allison to schedule. Here's her email address.   maltesefamily@comcast.net

GLADEVIEW SLIDE SHOWS

CCC is continuing to do slide monthly shows for the residents at the Gladeview Rehab Center in Old Saybrook.   These shows help the residents stay in touch with the outside and often invoke memories and we've received very positive feedback from the facility. We will need volunteers to do slide shows through the summer and fall. Travel is always an enjoyable topic as well as local scenes and events, but other topics are welcome. The presentation should take about thirty minutes or less. Our experience is that 50—60 images will usually fit into that timeframe.   You can use the club projector as well as the club laptop if you need it. The facility is flexible on scheduling a Tuesday that will work for you. Please consider volunteering.   It's fun, the audience is enthusiastic, and it's a nice way to show some of your great images. If you would like to do a slide show but need help with creating or presenting it, let Maryann know and one of us will be happy to give you a hand. We will also accompany you during your presentation, if you'd like a little extra support.

FOCUS STACKING

By Mike Frechette

In striving to improve your photography, you may eventually reach a point where the limitations of the physical characteristics of your lens become apparent. For example, you might want to take a landscape shot with both the foreground and background in perfect focus. If it's a cloudy day you may not want to push your ISO up beyond 100 because you don't want to introduce noise. You can open the F-stop to 1.4 and set your focal point about 2/3 into the frame and that will capture those mountains in the distance nice and sharp. But the log in the foreground is now out of focus. If you set your focus point on the log, the mountains won't be in focus. What can you do?

One solution is to take multiple shots and combine them using a techniques known as 'focus stacking'. Focus stacking involves shooting the same scene or subject multiple times using different focus points in each shot. Then layering the images on top of each other, using only the portion of each image that is in focus. Specialized software is usually required to do this.

Focus stacking software places each image in a separate layer and then automatically masks out any parts of each layer that are not in focus. It's like cutting out only the 'in-focus' parts of the image and pasting those parts on top of the parts of another picture that are not in focus. All you need to do is load the images into the stack and let the software do its 'magic'. Photoshop, Paintshop, Photoshop Elements, GIMP, and SmartPhotoEditor (SPE), all have layering functionality. and Topaz do not.

If you'd like to try this, it's imperative that you use a tripod and if possible, use a remote trigger to minimize any movement of the camera between shots. You need to use manual focus because the autofocus feature on the camera will not produce a series of different focus points. When you're ready, set your exposure, ISO and F-stop, then take two or more pictures, changing the focus point each time that you take a new shot. If you're shooting a landscape scene, two pictures will probably be sufficient. If you're using a macro lens then you'll probably need more shots. Focus stacking is commonly used in macro photography.

Load your raw images into Adobe Lightroom (or you can use Camera Raw in Photoshop) to make any desired adjustments, then copy or apply the final settings to the other images in the series. Export the whole series as JPEGs into a work folder. This is recommended so that the original raw images remain intact.

In Photoshop, select 'Automation Tools', then 'Scripts', and then load the files into a stack. The stack will consist of one layer for each image loaded in the series. Select all the images in the stack, then select 'Edit' and 'Auto Align'. Then 'Edit' and 'Auto Blend' the layers. Photoshop will automatically create a series of masks for each layer which will allow only part of each image that is in focus to show in the final version. If you are happy with the resulting image, you can combine into one layer.

If you want to experiment, you can try manually creating the mask for the layers. Limit yourself to two images for a landscape focus stack. That way you'll only need to do one masking layer.. You'll have to do an alignment for the stacked images because when you change the focus point, even though you have changed nothing else, the perspective of each image will have very slightly changed. It's not too hard to manually align only two images but when the number of images increases, it becomes much harder. That's why you'll want to 'auto align' all the images as I described in the above paragraph. Also, if you are using Photoshop Elements, you won't be able to do focus stacking because there is no auto alignment function.

Photoshop has somewhat limited focus stacking capabilities. If you want to get more sophisticated, you can purchase software that specializes in focus stacking such as Helicon Focus ($200) and Zerene ($89). Both offer 30 day trials if you want to try them out.

Here I took two photographs of a scene. In one I focused on the piers in the background. In the other I focused on the cannon in the foreground. Using Photoshop elements, I merged the two pictures together creating a 'panoramic shot' with the following result:

The left side of the picture (shaded lighter), is foreground focused. The right side (darker shading) is background focused. Notice the imperfect alignment of the two pictures. This illustrates why you must use the software to align the merged pictures; otherwise you will spend a lot of time manually trying to match the sizes and perspectives.

The picture below was processed using a software product called Photomatix, which specializes in High Dynamic Range (HDR) photograph creation but can also be used to merge two pictures together.   This image looks sharp and clear, but it is deceiving. If you look closely at the pilings, you can see some 'ghosting'. Photomatix will allow you to de-ghost the image, but this requires some manual effort. Still, the effect is closer to what you would want; which is to have both the foreground and background in focus.

I decided to install a trial version of Zerene Stacker for this last image. Here I processed two images through Zerene. Both the cannon and the background piers are now in focus with no ghosting. I shot the pictures using a tripod with the camera set at F 7.1 at 1/250th second and ISO 100 and I used my 70-200mm zoom lens designed to give a small depth of field to illustrate how to stack the pictures.

If all this seems too complicated, there is another option. Cameras like the Panasonic G85 are capable of doing the focus stacking. The tradeoff is that it may take a minute or so for the camera to process a series of shots. So if you wanted to take a picture while it was processing, you would be out of luck. But it saves a lot of time spent on the computer.

So when would you use focus stacking? It can be used for landscape pictures, but you'd only need two or three pictures. And you cannot focus stack if there are rapidly moving clouds in the images or wind blown grasses or leaves or other moving subjects in the foreground. Focus stacking is most often used for macro photography where the depth of field is very small and might require a dozen shots to get the whole object in focus. Like everything else in photography, this is just another tool that the photographer can use to make the image better.

TIDBITS #103—ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING

By Archie Stone

This is the first part of a multi-part article on artificial sources of light for photographers.   We know that there are basically four types of lighting:

Ambient, is the light that comes from everyday sources. Obviously the sun is number one on the list. It can be subdivided into direct, light overcast, overcast, shade, etc. Interior and exterior lights are two other examples. Candles, fire and reflections are other sources. This lighting, though it can be modified to some extent, is the only lighting not directly under the photographer's control.

The next three sources have something in common: they are directly under the photographer's control. They can be hand held, directly on the camera, or on stands that allow them to be moved, turned, raised or lowered, or bounced. Some, but not all, have intensity and or color controls or can be modified with filters. Some have modeling lights or pre flash. They also can be paired up and/or mixed with other light sources and can be set up to give light from different directions.

Continuous lighting, previously known as hot lights (because they generated a lot of heat), is provided by such things as work lights, tungsten hot lights, light banks, fluorescents, and the new LED lights. They have one thing in common in that the light is continually on, which allows you to see the effect of any changes on the subject.

Flash, gives off a great volume of light over a very short (think thousandths of a second) duration. Some have pre flash to minimize redeye, some have strobe effect to allow for high shutter speeds, and some high end lighting may even be able to act as modeling lights. They can be on camera or off with use of dedicated extension cords, radio or infrared transmitters. They can also be used in multi flash setups. They do not have the output of studio strobes, but are more portable and cheaper.

Studio strobes, can do everything flashes can do plus, they usually come as a kit with multiple lights, stands, case, battery pack and all the necessary cords. They also pack a punch as to light power. What is nice is that they have built – in modeling lights which are low power, continuous lights that let you see the lighting effect while you make adjustments. Some, called mono lights, have the battery built into the light pack. Some now have rechargeable batteries eliminating the need for extension cords. Regular studio lights have wires to the battery pack and tend to be larger with greater output. Not as portable as flash.

Reflectors, can be any object from a spoon to a large manufactured, 8x8 foot cloth surface with stands which come with varying textures and colors. In other words, anything that reflects light can be used, so long as you can control direction, intensity, and coverage. Reflectors will put less light on the subject, since the light has to travel from the main light source to the reflective surface, then to the subject. Reflectors are good for fill light, to fill in shadow areas, or add light to an area. They can also be used to reduce the contrast between light and dark areas to stay within the dynamic range of the camera sensor.

COASTAL CAMERA CLUB

The Coastal Camera Club was started in 1990 for the purpose of fostering the science and art of photography and developing the photographic skills of the members. Members are from the greater shoreline area stretching from West Haven to Lyme as well as bordering inland towns such as Essex and Killingworth. We meet in the café at the Madison Senior Center at 7pm the first and third Wednesdays of every month from September through June.

Feel free to call any of the officers listed on page two of this newsletter for more information.

AN INTERVIEW WITH CCC MEMBER PAT ANDERSON

By Susan Frechette

Pat has been an active and contributing member of our club since 1992. She has held a number of positions on the board and has been a past president as well as publicity chairperson, the organizer for the 40 slide review and she published the newsletter for a while.   Many of her images have been published in local town calendars, the Guilford Savings Bank calendars, and twice her photos have been featured on the cover of the Source calendar. She has had her images published in the Scranton Memorial Book as well as the Clinton Art Society bulletin, and she was commissioned to provide 8 x 10 photos of the Shoreline Greenway Trail.   One of her photographs was exhibited at the Images show at the Guilford Art Center last year. She is also an accomplished painter and has had many of her watercolors published and exhibited. She is an elected artist member of the Clinton and Madison art societies and the Clinton Art League. Over the winter I met with Pat several times to work on photos and to talk about photography and art. She's an interesting person and I thought that you might like to know more about her.

Please tell us something about yourself.

I am a retired professor and chairperson of Quinnipiac's Marketing & International Business Department. I also taught at UMASS/Amherst and Clark University in Worcester, MA. My research interest was learning why consumers bought what they did and how they were influenced by sellers' marketing efforts versus demographics and the environment. I spent my first forty years after college living in Massachusetts, but have lived in Connecticut since then. Even during those years in Massachusetts, I spent part of every year in Connecticut.   In my younger years, my husband was a professor, and this allowed me to attend graduate school and have a flexible teaching schedule while I raised our two children. My son and daughter-in-law have careers in government and banking in Washington DC and live in Virginia. My daughter founded and operates two caregiving businesses in Connecticut. I've always had cats. My last cat, Babe, "the Big Black Cat", loved to walk along the beach and pose for photos, especially while sitting on whatever I was trying to photograph.

How did you get started with photography?

I have always been interested in photography and was exposed to it when I was young by watching my Mom's dad and my Dad's brother who were both photography buffs. My Grandfather had a very good camera of the Ansel Adams type and my Uncle's hobby was taking family photos. I started out majoring in art in college, but by sophomore year I realized that it was too abstract for me, so I switched my major to economics. I no longer had art classes in my schedule so I enrolled in a photography class. I spent many hours that semester with the dark room enlarger and loved it.

How did you develop your photography skills? Have you had any formal training?

My formal training is in art. I paint indoors and outdoors. Many art classes focus on composition and impact and that has helped me with photography. The CCC critiques have been useful in improving my skills and I've attended the NECCC conferences at UMASS six times. I've also had NECCC judge training and experience judging exhibits and competitions.

What do you like to photograph and how do you approach a shoot?

My favorite subjects to photograph are usually found along coastal spots from Branford to Clinton. I often walk these areas with art groups, looking for places to paint and I always bring my camera and take pictures. Also, my house is on the beach in Madison and I can see the coastline from my windows. I can shoot from my guest room window when the weather is bad.   I also take photographs when traveling. Before retirement, I traveled around the world twice and also traveled to other countries in between those "business" trips. I loved taking travel photos from planes, trains and while sightseeing.

What things do you spend time on outside of photography?

I like to do creative activities and I also like exercise. I do tai chi, gardening, flower arranging, sewing, knitting, and painting. I paint with art groups every week; outside when the weather is good and inside when it's not.

Do you have a tip or two that you can offer to our members?

I have learned how light behaves in my favorite locations, how to recognize the preferred light conditions that occur with weather changes. I use this info to decide when and where to shoot. Ocean, creek, beach, clouds and rocks are often the subjects of my photos. I look for the correct place to stand, zoom and height at which to hold my camera. I prefer to use the smallest aperture possible, and usually shoot in aperture mode. If the wind affects clouds and waves, I shoot in shutter mode and set the shutter for 1/100. If lighting conditions are low, I use program mode and let the camera set the shutter and aperture. When it's too cold and windy to see what the camera 'sees', I just shoot and then check the image to see what aperture and shutter speed it set and then make adjustments before my next shot. I shoot raw and jpeg and use Adobe Photoshop Creative Cloud to develop my photos. I use the jpegs to choose crops for the best composition and the raw files for exposure and aperture. To get a memorable shot, I suggest that you take many shots of the same subject from different spots and angles and time of day.

CCC/SECCC JOINT COMPETITION RESULTS

The joint competition with the SECCC on April 4th was a great success! Well attended, great food, and wonderful images. Thank you everyone, for bringing such great dishes and for submitting all the beautiful images.   First place CCC winners are pictured below. All winners are listed on page 10 of this newsletter as well as on our website.

'Are You Looking At Me' by John Paton —1st place Salon Print Open Category

'Toscany' by Jacek Borkowski—1st place Digital Color Category

'Tattered Tulips' by Pat Anderson —1st place Digital Artistic Category

'Perserverance by Jim Maresca —1st place Black & White Salon Prints

CCC/SECCC JOINT COMPETITION RESULTS

Digital Artistic: 1st place: Pat Anderson (CCC) 'Tattered Tulips': tied for 2nd Place: Drea Koval (SECCC) 'End of the Dance'; David Candler (SECCC) 'Balancing Act'; Cheryl Philopena (SECCC) 'Pemaquid Reflection': tied for 3rd Place: Mary Tomasi (SECCC) 'Fleurs Roses'; Drea Koval (SECCC) 'Death of Film'; Mary Tomasi (SECCC) 'Bread and Wine'; Michael Cohn (SECCC) 'Little Blue Fishing in Mangroves'

Digital Black & White: tied for 1st place: Cathy Downie (SECCC) 'Tufted Titmouse'; Janet Donch (SECCC) 'To The Lake'; 2nd place: Jacek Borkowski (CCC) 'In Black and White'; tied for 3rd place: Louis Secki (CCC) 'Almost Finished'; Drea Koval (SECCC) 'Carnivale Beauty'; Pat Anderson (CCC) 'Wind Effect on Coastal Beach & Water'

Digital Color: 1st place: Jacek Borkowski (CCC) 'Toscany'; 2nd place; Michael Cohn (SECCC) 'Yellow Crown Night Heron Mates Building Nest'; tied for 3rd place: Jacek Borkowski (CCC) 'Toscany2'; Linda Waters (SECCC) 'Glacial Lagoon'; Cathy Downie (SECCC) 'Male Northern Flicker'; Michael Cohn (SECCC) 'Dinner is Served'; Louis Secki (CCC) 'Anti-Social Media'

Salon Print Open: tied for 1st place: John Paton (CCC) 'Are You Looking at Me' and Mary Tomasi (SECCC) 'Pink Flower', tied for 2nd place: Sue Frechette (CCC) 'Jelly Fish' and Drea Koval (SECCC) 'Off to Work in Venice'; tied for 3rd place: Cathie Downie (SECCC) 'Barred Owl', Mike Frechette (CCC) 'Butterfly', Jim Maresca (CCC) ' Coexistence', Janet Donch (SECCC) 'Moraine Lake', Bob Fedder 'Rainbow Drops'.

Salon Print Black & White: 1st place: Jim Maresca (CCC) 'Perservance; 2nd place; Drea Koval (SECCC) 'Dying Cypress'; tied for 3rd place: Janet Donch (SECCC) 'Ghost Lotus', Jim Maresca (CCC) 'Lost Ballerina'.

CAP COMPETITION RESULTS

Last fall the Connecticut Association of Photographers (CAP) sponsored a competition among Connecticut camera clubs. CCC was represented by twelve images submitted by six of our members. Below are the final results of the CAP competition.

Overall Ranking		
Club	**Score**	**Rank**
New Haven	306	1
Stamford	302	2
Quinebaug	300	3
Simsbury	298	4
Oxford Greens	290	5
Bridgeport	289	6
Coastal	283	7
Milford	280	8
North Haven	280	8
Granby	275	10
Wallingford	265	11
Quiet Corner	259	12
Castle Craig	258	13

CCC Individual Scores		
Title	**Maker**	**Score**
Lobster Landing	Jacek Borkowski	24
Louvre Entrance	Maryann Flick	26
Teton Dawn	Mike Frechette	25
Twin Water Lilies	Allison Maltese	25
Ebb and Flow	Jim Maresca	26
Dawn McDaniels Marsh	Mark Janke	25
Mosque Shiraz Iran	Paula Chabot	22
Bald Eagle	Dianne Roberts	23
Rainbow Bind	Dawn Schieferdecker	22
Yellowstone Falls	Susan Frechette	21
Close Race	David Rathbun	23
Beach Winter	Blake Turley	21