

Cayuga Nature Photographers

Newsletter

January 2018 - Volume XXVI, No. 1

Share Your Best Three

We had a great meeting last January enjoying each member's best of the year. We will return to this again on Thursday, January 4. Can you pick just three? This is not easy, but it does increase your craft. The highly respected photographer, Freeman Patterson¹, suggests that your task as a photographer is to make sure that the subject is expressed as clearly as possible, which implies with little distracting content. Then the viewer will respond appropriately. That is good guidance for the selection process. Let's also share our 2018 resolutions (goals?) to improve our photo skills, equipment or experiences.

At the January meeting we will also form plans for some activities. Last year we had an enjoyable photo shoot in the Liberty Bailey Hyde Conservatory on campus. Let's pick a date for 2018. In past years, members have also met to walk up to the base of Taughannock Falls for some great images of the icy falls. It's beautiful in January. Bring your additional ideas to us on the first Thursday of the month.

At our December meeting, Brian Chabot and Paul Schmitt shared highlights of their time at the Great Smoky Mountains Photography Summit. A brief summary begins on page 2, with links to useful ideas picked up from the many presenters. If you want to see the full PowerPoint, contact either Brian or Paul at their email. Paul also shared an update on the offsite image backup using BackBlaze. Some commentary and a few summary slides are included in the newsletter.

¹ pg. 68, Photography and the Art of Seeing, by Freeman Patterson 1985

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Thursday, January 4 at 7:30 PM

Cornell Plant Science Building,

Whetzel Seminar Room (Rm.404)

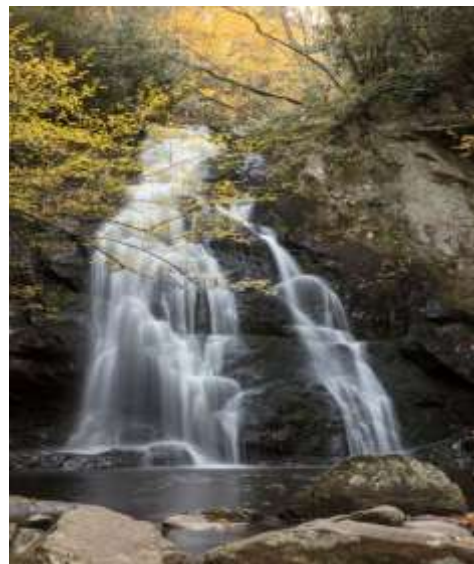


The GSM Photography Summit is a 4-1/2 day event with four components - morning field sessions led by the professionals seen above, concurrent break-out sessions led by these pros, keynote sessions with notable speakers and image critiques. Both technical and artistic topics are offered. Attendance is limited to 200, so there are many individual interactions. Each breakout is offered twice.



As an example, on the first morning, Brian and Paul were in a group of eight who hiked over a ridge with leaders Mandy Lea and RC Concepcion to reach the impressive Spruce Flats Falls in the park. At the top of the ridge, we paused to take in the foggy valley and autumn color.

The falls offered many possible interpretations and our leaders were actively encouraging each person. Below you can see RC and Mandy offering ideas (before moving aside).



By mid-morning, we were back for our first breakout sessions. Each participant has three field sessions offered and a free morning to explore as desired in the park. The mix of field time with technical and artistic content from our speakers produced a very rich result.

Here are a few highlights from our speakers along with a link to their online presence. Here are some ideas from Mandy Lea that applied to our time at Spruce Flats Falls.



Mandy Lea

Working with Water

- *Be present, analyze scene*
- *Define subject*
- *Start small, isolate scene*
- *Look for patterns*
- *Accentuate contrasting textures*
- *Clean the scene*
- *Include rocks*
- *Rivers as leading lines*
- *Try different times, light*
- *Use natural frames*
- *Look under water*
- *Determine priorities for camera settings*

Her website is pretty interesting. She lives full time in a tiny trailer traveling the country for creative, unique photographs. Mandy uses an approach on arrival at a new place of listening to what the locale offers in terms of a message, and then striving to present that message clearly in the image without distractions. She also suggested:

Wait for the light!

See Mandy Lea's website at:

www.mandyleaphoto.com



Another inspiring speaker was **Charles Glatzer**, a Canon Explorer of Light. He is a top wildlife photographer. See his website at:

<https://www.shootthelight.com/Charles--Glatzer,--EOL/1>

On the website, check out his video titled ***Close Enough Never Got You Anywhere.***

Here are some key bullet points from his talk:



- *Pay attention to detail*
- *Include foreground, middle, background*
- *Shadows define, give depth. Sidelight*
- *Shoot level or low*
- *Make the most of each opportunity*
- *Get focus, exposure, then multiple images*
- *Animals should have context*
- *Be ready for fleeting moments*

One key take-away from his presentation was to always set up your camera before arriving at your destination. Pick a set of values that allow you to respond to an unexpected situation. Could it be wildlife, landscape or macro? What would make you ready for a fleeting opportunity? For wildlife, perhaps it would be something like this:

Drive on burst, rear button focus activated, autofocus point to anticipate sort of framing expected, aperture/shutter/iso to capture freeze motion.

Once settled, one can shift to a long exposure if you decide to work on a creamy waterfall image, but be ready for the unexpected ducks in the stream as you approach. Glatzer also suggested studying studio photography to prepare to take better animal portraits. Interesting idea.



RC Concepcion was another lively presenter with a huge amount of ideas for processing images all the way to finished prints, and also for the process getting your images organized. First is how he begins organizing at the import stage. Recall that it is convenient in Lightroom to rename your images so that you have unique file names plus sensible data. RC noted that memory cards do fail, and the first indicator is when an image appears chopped up or partially blank. The question is, which card did I use for that photo? He numbers his cards, and keeps track of the days he has used a given number. When he downloads to the Lightroom, the renaming goes as follows:

- [date][place]_card_day_serial when he is using a card over more than one day
- or
- [date]_card_serial when a card was only used on a single day

So, corrupted images can be traced to a known card, and removed from use.

Perhaps of greatest value to CNP members was his approach to efficiently working through a large set of images to the end point of having your best edited, and the rest cleared away. RC does it on a fast track using only 3 levels assigned to each image. It is Pick, Skip, Trash. Pick is one he wants to examine in Develop Module. Skip is something not obviously suitable, but maybe will be used if nothing in the Pick group meets his expectations. Trash needs no consideration due to technical or compositional failures. Trash images are immediately X'd in Lightroom for deletion.

RC offered other little bits of wisdom. Converting RAW files on import to DNG results in 30% smaller files with negligible loss. If you have a camera with very large sensor size, this applies to you.

In the LR Develop module, toggling the backslash key (\) flips the screen image between the edited and the original file. This is powerful for evaluating whether your edits are giving a desired result. On the same note, the L key toggles the screen from normal through two steps of darkening so you see the image without distraction. Nice.

Note there is a huge list of shortcuts like the two above at the Adobe website. Maybe a few would be helpful beyond the above. See:

<https://helpx.adobe.com/lightroom/help/keyboard-shortcuts.html>

RC produces well-regarded training modules at a modest \$20 per unit, with a package also offered at a net lower price per unit. You can check them out at:

www.firstshotschool.com



Finally, **Colleen Miniuk-Sperry** offered some excellent guidance for approaching the scene before you begin to photograph. She spoke of key points to keep your photography fresh. Explore what you love with humility. Play is permitted. For a positive experience, search for things that mean something to you. Study what others are doing, but seek out the unique not easily seen by others. She offered some steps to use:

- Ask "How does it make you feel?"
- "What do you want viewers to feel?"
- Get a sensory perception before taking the camera out.
- Title the image before shooting.
- Make all image content intentional.

A simple example is at right. Perhaps a title, being few in words, helps to keep the result simple with few distractions.



Last Leaves of Autumn

Colleen's website is at:

www.cms-photo.com

This is only a taste of the overall content.

Good News- DXO to Release New Nik Collection Software

We have had several discussions in our meeting about noise reduction software, and for many, the go-to software in Define 2 in the Nik Collection. Google bought the company and let it languish with no updates to Windows, leaving the worry that it would die. Recently, the DXO software company bought Nik from Google, and speculation ran as to their intention. Here is the link to a report on CanonRumors:

<http://www.canonrumors.com/great-news-dxo-to-release-new-nik-collection-software-in-2018/>

An updated release is promised for 2018. No mention was made of price, but a modest amount would be a winner for those who love Define 2.

Update: BackBlaze

At our October meeting, Paul Schmitt presented an overview of how to back up photo files. See your November newsletter. Since then, Paul subscribed to the BackBlaze. At our December meeting, he offered a summary of the back up process. Here are a few summary slides of his experience

Why BackBlaze?

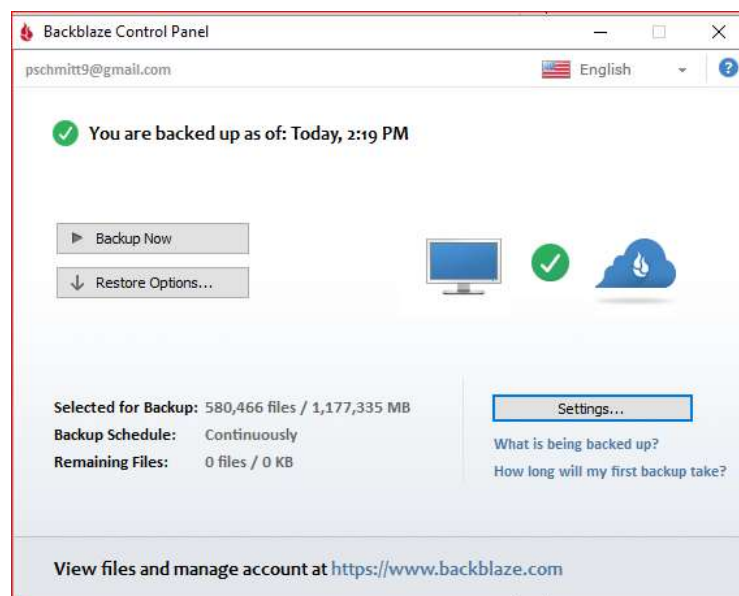
- Simple
- Once loaded, just runs
- Cost: \$50 yr. no limit
- Make and sell the servers to others; holding power
- Recovery options
 - Web download
 - Mail 128G flashUSB \$99
 - Mail 4T hard drive \$189
 - Return for refund, 30 days



After backup:

1,177 GB

580,466 files



What was the upload like?

- 1,172,872 MB began 10 Oct.
- Completed 21 Nov. with some pauses.
- Typical rate was about 0.5 Mbits/sec.
- TIFF files from the Define 2 output were an issue. Huge.
- Now, I immediately convert Define 2 TIFF to JPEG.
- Daily operation is not noticed.



Why so slow? Let's look at Spectrum.

Here is what Spectrum is delivering.

- Much faster download @ 21 Mbits/sec
- Upload @ 2.7 Mbits/sec max
- The final speed is affected by all elements in the path to BB.



...where am I now?

- ✓ 4 copies of my photo files (+ catalog)
- ✓ 3 separate locations
 - a. 2@home (one is SyncToy)
 - b. Friend's gun safe
 - c. BackBlaze
- ✓ 2 off-site from my computer

Feeling safer, and with less effort. BackBlaze runs back-up about twice daily at the minimum.

Please Note

Membership is \$20, due currently. You may pay at our next meeting, or, if preferred, you can mail it to Nancy Ridenour at 346 Warren Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Thank you!

Cayuga Nature Photographers Newsletter Volume XXVI, No. 1	
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