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“A Slide Presentation”

By Ron Winch

It's embarrassing! As the image of the pine forest fades and melds into an image of a Saw-whet Owl surveying the forest floor in hopes of locating breakfast – a Red-backed Vole perhaps. Emotions are high and words don't come easy. My voice cracks a bit and the lump in my throat grows larger.

Strange that I should have these feelings now; as I'm in the midst of a slide presentation to some fifty folks at a Wisconsin State Park. The image on the screen is being experienced only with my eyes, although the soft background music relaxes the spirit and encourages a mood.

Step back in time to the morning the image was made. The sun, like a big orange, peeked over the horizon two hours ago and kissed the river valley with its warmth.

A Veery's song drifted through the woods like the morning fog, and the smell of moist earth, reminiscent of decades of spring mornings is so succulent you can almost taste it. A shadow glides by on silent wings. The Saw-whet Owl glides to his hunting perch on an aspen snag. Soft green maple leaves unfold in the warmth of a new day as I loosen the ball-head and frame the tender leaves and owl into a pleasing composition. The soft green background enhances the image as my index finger gently presses the shutter release. Two seconds and twelve frames later the owl, startled by the staccato rattle of the motor drive, flies to a quiet part of the forest.

For me, that is what nature photography is all about. Being alone in the woods – it's like being in a living library. You experience nature at her grandest with all of your senses. It is here that feelings are at a high pitch for you have captured an elusive moment in the secretive life of a Saw-whet Owl.

Over the river an eagle screams and only fifty yards away a Ruffed Grouse – high on testosterone – drums frantically to attract any unmated female. Thoughts begin to drift as I wander the forest in search of more fine images, but I can't forget that moment.

Editing the slides on the light-table, I find 4 discards, 7 very good shots, and one exceptional image where the bird – close to the edge of the frame – is looking out of the shot, ala Robert Bateman. Although I recognize it's a great shot, a myriad of distractions does not allow me to truly savor the moment.

Only in the slide presentation, after a brief introduction to the program, and what nature photography means to me, do the images begin to get to me. Soft

mesmerizing music and the near darkness of the room overcome all distractions. It is in this dark void with the slides projected on the six foot screen that feelings for the images are at their strongest. I am transported back to the taking of every image, only now emotions are higher. There are only me and the audience, background music, and the images. It is the audience that I am playing to and I want to involve them in the moment. There is a time for quiet and a time to tug at their emotions.

If you can truly get your viewers emotionally involved in the beauty, wonder and awe of the story you and your images are portraying, you will have done a great job of entertaining, Educating, and giving them a greater appreciation for our natural world.

And they will invite you back.

Field Notes

“White Balance”

By John Pennoyer

When SLR digitals first came out and long before I took up this new technology, one of the terminologies that was new to me was “white balance.” I had no idea what that was but after shooting digital for 3 years now, I have become very comfortable with this new selection that digital photographers must make when taking digital images. When shooting film or slides in the past a photographer selected either outdoor or indoor film depending on their shoot. The film manufacturers determined the “white balance” based on a particular films use. Without making this real technical, white balance is used to balance the color of light. Light has a temperature that is measured in Kelvin degrees. As the temperature changes the color also changes. We all know what would happen if indoor film was used outdoors or vice versa. So it is important for digital photographers to select the correct white balance so the neutral tone subject will be neutral and not have some unsightly color cast to it. Listed below are some common white balance settings as taken from my Nikon handbook. (K= Kelvin Temperatures)

Auto: 3500 K---8000K
Fluorescent: 3000K
Incandescent: 4200K
Daylight sunny: 5200K
Daylight cloudy: 6000K
Daylight shade: 8000K
Flash: 5400K

If you notice auto white balance has a very wide range of temperatures. When a photographer selects this setting, they are allowing the algorithm of the camera to choose the correct temperature for their particular shoot. When I first started shooting digital this was my white balance setting. It actually did work on most occasions. But when spring came and I started using diffusers etc. for my wildflowers, they always had a color cast. I no longer use the auto setting. One of my workshop participants in my August workshop was shooting a bear in the creek. The sun was low and many of us got some great images. When he showed me his image the bear had a very blue cast to it. I knew immediately that he had his white balance on auto, and unfortunately he was shooting jpegs and there is not too much he can do to remove the blue color cast. In those situations white balance should have been set to cloudy. Of course this brings up another issue. In shooting jpegs it is important for the photographer to always set your camera for your particular shoot because in post processing white balance cannot be changed. If shooting raw images white balance can be changed in post processing. For me I now always have my white balance set to either daylight sunny or cloudy and on some occasions to shade. I will use shade white balance on sunrise/sunset type of images because it will add more warmth to the image. In the "old" days when shooting wildflowers on an overcast day or using a diffuser it was common for me to use a 81A or 81B warming filter to remove any blue cast that would result in that type of light. For digital shooters just set your white balance to cloudy or shade and you will get the same results. I now no longer use warming filters.

I just came back from Alaska and many of the photographers got into a discussion of "white balance" and from that discussion many of them still use the auto setting. I know that it covers a wide range of color temperatures, but for me I have much better luck setting my white balance to settings other than auto, and my results are what I would expect with no surprises. But I also shoot raw image and can still alter my white balance if the need arises.

A digital photographer must always remember that a higher Kelvin temperature will always "warm" the image which means more "yellow." And the lower the temperature will "cool" the image which means more "blue".

Almost 100% of my shooting is outdoors. But if I did any indoor shooting I would use the "custom" feature of my camera which means to set your camera to this feature and shoot a gray card so it completely fills the frame. The algorithm of the camera will set your white balance based on the type of light. Every camera manufacturer will have a feature such as this but you would need to read your owners handbook because they all will do it differently.

Setting the white balance for your shoot is really no different than choosing the correct film. For most outdoor nature photographers using either daylight sunny, cloudy or shade will result in the correct color temperature. Each setting can also be tweaked in post processing or in camera

settings to be warmer or cooler from the setting that you choose.

I have attached 4 photos of the same group of morels, all with different white balance settings.

Daylight cloudy 6000K: When I use a diffuser this is a common white balance setting that I use, this is the way that I took this particular photo.



By John Pennoyer

Daylight sunny 5200K: This is also a very acceptable image notice the green Creeping Charlie is actually a little greener than the cloudy image. Some photographers may prefer this over "cloudy". Of course you will need to see the color using our web site newsletter!



By John Pennoyer

Daylight Shade 8000K: I know of a professional photographer that uses this WB on a regular basis, however I use it very selectively it is almost always to "yellow" for me. These morels are now way to warm for my taste.



By John Pennoyer

Incandescent 3000K: Of course I put this in just to show that lower temps will add blue. However, always remember that sometimes using a different WB can make a very creative photograph. I used this setting on a moon light image and it made for a great image.



By John Pennoyer

Good Shooting
John Pennoyer

September Salon Results
Judges: Vijay Karai and Dave Vichich

Score of 8:

Duke, Larry	Greater Prairie Chicken
Ellenbecker, Dave	White Lady Slipper Group
Jenkins, John	I don't think so
Cleveland, Ron	Lutsen Sunrise (W)
Flohr, Rikk	MotoSwans (W)
Perez, Dave	amnicon falls
Sanderson, Wayne	Egret
Wilbrecht, Jon	Red Fox
Cyr, Mariann	Geranium
Flohr, Rikk	Bridal Veil Falls

Goossens-Bryan, Betty	Robin w insect
Miller, Joe	Lake Itasca
Perez, Dave	Monarchs on flower
Wilbrecht, Jon	Cougar

Score of 9:

Samuelson, Tom	Milk Weed
Scholljegerdes, Florence	Woodduck Swimming
Galambos, Ted	Table Mountain
Bertas, Mary Kay	Yosemite
Aronson, Jim	Yellow Warbler (W)
Fleury, Cynthia	Wood Anemone
Graves, Rick	Eagle Two (W)
Lahr, Ron	clouds
Sanderson, Virginia	Egret w Chick (W)
	Showy Lady Slipper
Aronson, Jim	Bud
Mattison, Drew	Hyena (W)
Morgan, Jeff	CA Sunset
Sanderson, Virginia	Grasshopper (W)

Score of 10:

Jenkins, John	The Legend Continues
Mattison, Drew	Osprey (W)
McDonough, Jean	Mountain Goat (W)
Miller, Joe	Itasca
Polley, Lil	Dragonfly (W)

Nature Photography Discussion Group

For at least the first few months our format will include discussions of member submitted images, re-evaluation of selected images from the MNPC monthly salon (where we can chew over the judges), and an education program. In October, the program will be "Mastering Camera Raw". This is a recorded program (DVD) by the Photography Guild. The meeting will be at 7pm at the Lutheran Church of the Risen Christ (Map on the Minnesota Nature Photography Club website or contact Mike Prokosch) on Monday October 23rd.

2006 NorthStar Circuit of Nature Photography.

Entry forms are on-line at www.cameracouncil.org. Our club sponsors one of the sections and it will be judged on Saturday December 16th (we will need about 8 workers). There are also judging's on the 2nd and 9th of December, volunteers or observers are always welcome. This is one of the premier nature photography salons in the country and is the largest in this area. It's a chance to see images from all over the world and to compete with some truly great photographers.

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Editor: Don Nadreau, 763-377-4589,
dnadreau@usfamily.net
124 Ardmore Dr.
Golden Valley, MN 55422

President: Mariann Cyr 651-636-3738
mcyr@mmm.com
Vice Pres.: Larry Duke
lduke1601@earthlink.net
Treasurer: Jim Duncan 651-459-3558
jduncan001@comcast.net
Secretary - Rod Blesener 952.465.3420
rblesener@fishbowl solutions.com

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, September through May

6:15 PM - Set-up and Social Time
6:45 PM - Announcements and Business
7:00 PM - Program
8:00 PM - Nature Salon (Competition and Judge's Comments).

Meetings are held at:

Visitor Center, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge,
3815 East 80th Street
Bloomington, MN

October 18, 2006 Meeting

Judges for the October Salon will be Betty Goossens-Bryan and Joe Kandiko

October's Program:

"Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar"
By Jim Heintzman

How does he select those pictures, anyway? A glimpse behind the production scenes from the editor of the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar, Jim Heintzman. Jim will also talk about his interest in his own photography.

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Dues Deadline November 15th.

We wanted to remind everyone that your dues need to be paid by November 15th in order to participate as a member of the club. This includes participation in the November salon as well as the Year-End competition. This date is also used as the cutoff for inclusion in the club directory. So pay up and continue to enjoy the benefits of membership in the Minnesota Nature Photography Club.