



Nature Photo Times

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From the President

The November meeting was one of the fastest that I have seen in over 26 years of going to our club meetings. But at the same time I don't think we skipped a beat on quality. Mariann Cyr's presentation of the winners of the Minnesota Botany was in a slide show format, which was very well done and congratulations to all of you winners who got acceptances or higher awards in the competition, and thanks Mariann for once again being in charge of this event. Mariann will probably be giving a report on the future of our Minnesota Botany at a future meeting.

The good thing about having such a speedy program was that this gave our salon judge Dale Bohlke lots of time to make comments on each and every image. Not only is Dale an accomplished photographer but I always like his comments, they usually are not the ordinary comments, but gives us a little more insight on how to improve an image. Thanks Dale for judging, let us know if anyone in the club can reciprocate for your club. Of course our December meeting will be our End of Year competition. All images that scored an 8 or higher from January 08 to November 08 will be entered. Our Judge will be Jay Steinke (www.jaysteinke.com) a full time professional photographer out of Duluth. His work is featured in many galleries throughout the Midwest and has been in many magazines. He also is the author of a couple of books on his photography.

After the judging we will of course have some great refreshments that all of you will bring to satisfy our palates. Hopefully I will get more than one piece of celery this time! (You had to be at the November meeting) This will allow us to not only talk individually with Jay but to fellowship with all and possibly we can all indulge in a little bit of bragging! See you at the December Meeting!

Good Shooting
John Pennoyer

"Mongolia and the Golden Eagle Festival" By Ron Winch

The golden eagle sprang from its mountain-side perch with powerful wing beats and in a long sweeping dive headed for his horse mounted Kazak handler, who was racing away from him. The eagle should land on the arm of the horseman as any hunting raptor would. But the bird obviously saw a more interesting prey. Powering past his galloping handler the eagle dove into a small opening in the fascinated observers. The boy ducked as the ten pound eagle struck – both went tumbling to the dry grassy steppe as the boys fur cap went flying in the dust. Fortunately an eagle hunter nearby on horseback dismounted, grabbed the jesses and got the eagle onto his heavily-gloved hand. Fortunately the boy was not injured and hopefully he learned a good lesson, as there had been three warning announcements that anyone wearing fur caps or red jackets should remove them and keep them out of sight. The eagles had been trained to regard these as prey. Some folks had not heeded the warnings and two more were struck by eagles that same afternoon. And this was only day one of the three-day Golden Eagle Festival.

Ten years ago several eagle hunters and a couple of tour companies ran eagle hunting as a dying way of life. They began promoting a festival as a revival of old Kazak ways and as a tourism event. The festival began slowly in the early years and now has become a three day event among the nomads in far northwestern Mongolia. This year 84 eagle hunters rode in on horseback from as far as 100 miles with an eagle on their arm. The event began in the town of Ulgi with opening ceremonies in the town square. Eighty-four Kazak eagle hunters renewed old acquaintances and milled around the town square before heading out for the 45 minute ride to the event grounds. Some five hundred spectators had gathered to enjoy the warm sunny afternoon and watch the various contests such as a horseback tug of war, where each rider tries to pull the other off his horse; or while riding along reaching down to pick up a stone from the ground; or the best traditional costume.

Of course the eagle events were the highlights of the day. The birds were released from the mountain side to swoop down and capture a fox skin dragged by their owner on horseback. Another test for the eagles was to fly down from the mountain and land on the arm of his owner who was galloping away. A few eagles have a mind of their own and quickly caught an updraft and soared

high above the event rounds, only to come down when ready.

Spectators came from the U.K., the USA and several European countries. An English lady traveled with her 6 year old daughter, a German man was there because he was a falconer, and a European lady who had attended several festivals and befriended a nomadic family discovered that this year they had no means of getting to the event. She then arranged for transportation, food and a ger for the family during the festival. The best thing was that our ger camp was only a quarter mile from the event grounds. We travelled first class – lodging was ger where night-time temps got into the 20 degree range, the toilet was a hole in the ground, tea water was dipped from the river and boiled, and mutton for every meal.

If you are interested, I'm willing to share more information.

Field Notes

"What Lens/Camera Should I Buy?"

By John Pennoyer

When Nikon came out with their very first Vibration Reduction lens (VR) it was an 80-400mm F4.5-5.6 VR lens. I was ecstatic; finally Nikon has something to compete with Canon. I did not purchase one at that time and it was not long that the next VR lens was the 70-200mm F 2.8 S VR lens. This really put me into a dilemma, I had just sold my old 70-200mm S non-VR lens on eBay, but due to the fact that both of the newer lenses are in the same focal length up to 200mm I could see no reason to have both. Luckily for me a good friend of mine happen to have purchased the 80-400 VR lens and he let me use it for a few days. I used that lens for 3 days during one of my photo workshops. Here is what I discovered; the auto focus of the 80-400 is old technology it is the older version with the AF built in camera and not the newer "Silent Wave Motor" (S) with the AF built in the lens. The S series AF is very fast and very quiet. The older technology is very slow to AF and also very noisy. Shooting fast moving subjects with this lens in my opinion would be very difficult, not that you may not capture some images, but I know that the "S" type AF is considerably faster. Of course being a variable aperture, as you would zoom the aperture would change from wide open F4.5 at 80mm to F5.6 at 400mm. Also to switch between AF and MF on the 80-400 is very cumbersome as compared to the S series lenses. At the time I was making this decision I was shooting film so the "crop factor" was not a consideration for me. My decision was to purchase a Nikon 70-200mm F2.8 S VR lens. I figured that, coupled with the Nikon 1.7 X convertor, would give me a focal length of 340mm, a little shorter length than 400mm but with faster AF and a fixed aperture of F2.8. With the prices of both lenses being very close that was the route that I chose. I also recommended a combination such as this to other individuals that have asked me. (However I am not completely sold on the 1.7X convertor!!)

Let's now fast forward to about 5 years later, as a matter of fact today! Over the last 5 years I have used that combination for anything from close-ups (with a 500D Canon close-up attachment) wildlife, scenic's, etc. It has been one of my most frequently used lenses and I love it with no regrets on my decision. But this last summer I was noticing some VR "clunks" and at times the AF and VR would not operate. I took it into Marquette Camera and they agreed something was wrong and suggested that I send it into Nikon. I checked all my papers and found out that I still had some of my extended 5 year warranty left. I sent it into Nikon and even right now (6 weeks later) it is being repaired under warranty. After over 25 years of shooting Nikon my very first issue of any type that required repair. But what was I going to do for a lens of that focal length especially at this time of the year, Sandhill Crane flight shooting and of course one of my favorite subjects rutting Whitetail Bucks!! Well it certainly pays to have friends, another friend of mine had the 80-400mm VR lens and he has let me borrow it! I have now been using that lens for about 6 weeks and have taken well over 1300 images with it. My first target was at Crex Meadows for Sandhill Cranes. Although I did get some good images of flying cranes, my first impression 5 years ago was right on. Very slow to AF and difficult to stay locked on to bird, but using this lens on birds that were on the ground really posed very little problems. The images were tack sharp, so again my biggest concern was the slow AF on fast moving subjects. I have also used this lens as a "walk around" lens, simply walking some trails at community parks hoping to locate a rutting whitetail buck and capture some images. I succeeded on many occasions and captured some great images with this lens. Of course now that I am shooting digital this lens is equivalent to a 120mm to 600mm Zoom VR lens. Both lenses the VR functions are fantastic I have captured images handholding at 1/40 to 1/60 second with tack sharp images.

After many years of instructing classes/workshops etc., I am asked many times on what type of equipment they should purchase. I learned long ago to never recommend buying a particular lens, camera, model, brand etc. The reason is that what you like may not apply to their financial means, type of use, and many other reasons. I may tell them what I like about my camera/lenses but if I have never used the type of equipment they are asking about, I really cannot give an accurate opinion. I always suggest they go to a good camera store such as National Camera, West Photo etc. and "touchy feely" the equipment they are thinking of. Also check internet sources for reviews of this equipment and talk to those that have and use the type of equipment they are interested in. I do feel many photographers will recommend something that they may have no experience with and just because it is of the name brand they shoot so it must mean that it is great! I will be the first to admit that I fell into that category, but have learned my lesson. Depending on your shooting style and subjects, it is very possible the 80-400mm VR lens will be a great lens in addition to your camera bag if a Nikon shooter.

As much as I still love my 70-200mm S VR lens, when using this lens in my canoe for some waterfowl and Loon photography, shooting digital would make it an equivalent 300mm focal length and at times will add a 1.7X convertor, but there are still times that I wished that I had more focal length. Ummmmmm!! I wonder if the 80-400mm VR lens should be in my camera bag for certain photo situations!! Stay tuned!!!



“Sandhill Cranes”

By John Pennoyer



“November Rut”

By John Pennoyer

Good shooting

November Salon Results (Judge Dale Bohlke):

Score of 8

Nadav Cassuto	Crane_With_Fall_Colors1(W)
Ted Galambos	Woplf Creek
John Ringquist	MuleshowAreaElk (W)
Mariann Cyr	Leaves on Log
Lawrence Duke	Woker Bee
Joe Fierst	MothOnLadyslipper
Jean	
McDonough	Gazelle drinking at Etosha (W)
Lil Polley	Mountain Goat (W)
John Jenkins	Couger Grooming
Marylin	
Gladitsch	Nine Mile Marigolds

Score of 9

Mariann Cyr	Mallard Family (W)
Lawrence Duke	Eagle at Nest
John Dykstra	Shuksan
Don Tredinnick	GiantMushroom
Roger Williams	In Flight (W)
Jim Aronson	Swans in Fog (W)
Rod Blesener	Chaos (W)
Nadav Cassuto	Crane_With_Fall_Colors2(W)
Ron Cleveland	Aubrey Falls
Christine Hysell	Raven Lake
Marylin	
Gladitsch	Indian Paintbrush Duo

Score of 10

Karl	
Fiegenschuh	Sandhill and Chick (W)
Drew Mattison	Porkies
Jean	
McDonough	Male Impala Portrait (W)
John Pennoyer	Pileated Family (W)
Carolle Ramos	Foggy Sunrise
David Zosel	Autumn Birches (W)
Karl	
Fiegenschuh	White Sands Sunset
Dave Vichich	In Fog (W)

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Minnesota Nature Photography Club
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Editor: Don Nadreau, 763-377-4589,
don.nadreau@gmail.com
124 Ardmore Dr.
Golden Valley, MN 55422

President: John Pennoyer 763-416-4134
johnpennoyer@comcast.net

Vice Pres.: Rod Blesener 952.465.3420
rblesener@fishbowl-solutions.com

Treasurer: Jim Duncan 651-459-3558
jduncan001@comcast.net

Secretary: Linda Nygren 651-778-0340
stereogal@gmail.com

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

6:00 PM - Set-up and Social Time

6:30 PM - Announcements and Business

6:45 PM - Program

7:45 PM - Nature Salon (Competition and
Judge's Comments).

Meetings are held at:

REI
750 West American Blvd
Bloomington, MN 55420

December Meeting Wednesday Dec. 17, 2008

The December program will consist of the year end
competition which Jay Steinke of Duluth has
graciously volunteered to judge. Jay has a
website at <http://www.jaysteinke.com>.

We will also have our **annual holiday buffet**. Be
sure to bring a food item to pass around!!

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Note from the Editor:

This will be my last year as your newsletter editor. If
anyone is interested in picking up the mantle, please
drop me a note, call me at 763-377-4589, or see me at
one of the meetings. I will be more than happy to help
you get started. It is an interesting job if you enjoy
working on the PC and writing. This position is an
elected position and is also a member of the club board
of directors.