

Through the Viewfinder



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From the Prez's Pad

Sal Santangelo

June 2016

I haven't entered many juried gallery shows (3 or 4 to be exact) but always had at least one image accepted. Last month I entered three images into a curated/juried show that had no specific theme but wanted one's break-through efforts or those that brought a new incite to one's art. Pretty general, no? Well, I felt the sting of rejection having all three rejected, no explanation and out \$47 in entry fees.

To say I was a little irked would be an understatement. I wondered about the juror/curator. He is the curator/executive director of a rather large art association in Los Angeles. What were his possible biases? Did he not like or consider photography a true art form? Did he only want contemporary abstract expressionism and not my more perceptually interpreted subjects? Did he not like my "artist bio"? Who knows but it would be soothing to a bruised ego to have some feedback when one gets a rejection, whether related to an art piece, a promotion at work or any other achievement based effort. Well, another reason to be so happy about VCCC's critique meetings. One gets to go to school (so to speak) on one's own submissions as well as everyone else's.

So, why does one get rejections? I have already alluded to one, not knowing your market, i.e., the bias of the judge/curator. I would love to say that all judges should be aware of their biases and take them into account when judging/curating but I would be a fool to believe that all possess this kind of altruism.



From the Prez's Pad (cont'd)

Another cause can be the craft of image making or lack thereof. I am referring to following the artistic rules of composition, use of light and the like, but also the technical craft of photography...is the image sharp, was the choice of lens appropriate, is there good color balance, the highlights are not blown out nor are the shadows blocked up, the image is not over sharpened, etc.

Another issue is whether your subject matter is novel. With the number of people with DSLRs, iPhones, point-and-shoots, workshops taking everybody to the same places with the same vantage points and time of day to shoot plus all the social media outlets, it is hard to create a new, novel interpretation of an old subject and keep someone's interest. So, submitting only the images for which I received a merit should help but in this case it sure didn't.

So what is one to do? I'm tired of hearing the "old saw" of it being an experience to learn from, the proverbial learning moment. I guess I will continue trying to make sure my images are fresh, the best they can be artistically and technically as well as presented in the most professional manner. Knowing that, however, still doesn't mitigate the sting of rejection.

See you all Wednesday June 8, 2016 when our judge/teacher will be Greg Cooper and the assigned topic for this month is Landscape.

Sal



Exploring Digital Photography with Photonaut

Portrait Studio Flash Photography

There has been a lot of recent interest and discussion about flash photography. Those that attended Hutch's workshop learned a lot about the types of relatively inexpensive equipment that are now available. However, there is a lot more that can be learned about how to position, measure, and control the intensity of flash units when taking portraits, and how to evaluate the results.

The first thing to consider when using artificial studio lighting is to determine what shadow effects on the subject's face are desired. Light or dark shadows, soft or hard shadow transitions, fully lit face, half lit face, Rembrandt lit face, etc. That determination controls the position, intensity, size, and distance of the studio lights needed.

The traditional basic portrait studio often uses some or all of the following lights:

1. A "Key" light is traditionally a bright light shining upon the subjects face at a 45 degree angle from the camera's position. It is usually positioned 45 degrees above the subjects head and pointed down to the subject.
2. A "Fill" light is usually positioned above and behind the camera. It determines how much the shadows from the key light are "filled" in. Its intensity determines the ratio of key light to fill light, or the range of intensity of bright to shadow light upon the face.
3. An "Edge" light is often needed to separate the side or top of the subject's head from the background, especially on the darker side of the head.
4. A "Background" light is needed to control the brightness of the background and to suppress the subject's shadows, if any are visible.

So, it appears that 4 lights are needed to properly control the light for studio portraits. You will find it described in textbooks as the Four Light Portrait Lighting Setup.

Fortunately, you typically do not need to buy 4 studio lights, you can frequently use techniques that only use 3 lights, and sometimes only one or two.

For example, a large umbrella light carefully positioned can provide both the key and fill light function, and if placed close to the subject and background, the background light as well. Not ideal, but it can work in a pinch in certain situations.

A more common setup is using 3 lights where the umbrella is used as the combined key and fill light function, an edge light provides background separation, and the background light controls background shadows. A reflector can augment as a the fill light function.



Exploring Digital Photography with Photonaut (cont'd)

This can be modified to only 2 lights, where the background light can also be pointed to provide some edge lighting upon the subject. Reducing the number of lights is a compromise that inhibits various things such as light to subject distances and subject positioning.

There are some lighting techniques that throw the above standard 4 light setup *out the window*. For example, using only two side edge lights, called “Hatchet” lighting, can provide interesting results, and another technique called “Clamshell” lighting can be done with only two lights, one above the head with a reflector held below, plus an edge light for background separation. There are some setups that do not use an umbrella at all, they use a small Beauty Dish or a Spotlight for situations where hard sharp shadows are desired.

Before we look at examples of different setups, we need to talk about the lighting ratio between each flash unit. That determines the intensity of the shadows. As a general rule, people prefer a lighting ratio of about 1 to 4. That means the fill light should be about 2 stops less bright than the key light. Also, edge lights generally work best when they are about 1 stop less than the key light. You don't want the hair on the back of the head blown out. How do you know what intensity each light is? Simple, you use a hand held incident light meter like the Sekonic shown on the right! Most can accurately measure flash intensity, and they give the result in f stops. Fire each light separately and take a reading at the subject's position. Manually adjust the intensity of each strobe up or down to the desired f stop. Finally, to set the camera exposure, take a reading with all lights firing together. If you don't have an incident light meter, then you are shooting in the dark, and have to do trial and error test shots. You can also use flash units set to the same intensity, and put them at different distances from the subject as measured by a string. Using a light meter is the best in most situations. Needless to say, all this predetermined precision requires that the strobe lights, and the camera, all be set to manual mode. In fact, large expensive studio strobe units only work in manual mode. TTL (Through The Lens) automatic strobe units are made by Nikon and Canon for their individual camera product lines to give photographers the ability to shoot flash without having to take light meter readings, but the downside to that is those photographers don't have an accurate idea of what light ratio they are actually using.



Exploring Digital Photography with Photonaut (cont'd)

Some TTL control systems allow the photographer to “dial in” a desired intensity ratio, but that is probably not the actual ratio of light that is falling upon the subject since many things can affect the real final results including modifiers and distances. TTL is good for situations where incident light readings cannot be taken, like for fast moving subjects such as sports.

OK, enough theory, here are some real examples of different lighting setups, pay attention to the intensity of the shadows on the face, and also how soft or hard the shadow transitions look. They were all taken in a very dark studio, so there was no ambient light, and all the light you see came from the strobe units adjusted using incident light metering.



Here we have a 2 light setup. A medium size umbrella was placed high on the right as the key light. An edge light was placed far behind the subject on the left side. Thats it! Notice the intensity of the shadows beside the nose, on the neck, and on the side of the face. The umbrella gave a nice soft transition to the shadows.



This setup was the same as the above image, except a fill light was added above the camera, making this a 3 light setup. The fill light was adjusted to be two f stops dimmer than the key light, as measured on the model's face with a meter. So that makes this the ideal 1:4 light ratio. The shadows are obviously much less deep than the above version, giving them a nice smooth soft look. Classic textbook lighting.



Exploring Digital Photography with Photonaut (cont'd)

The two examples on this page show lighting setups that are fairly unique.



The first one, on the left, used a technique call “Walking the Light”. A very large umbrella light was placed on the left, but it is not pointed at the subject, it was pointed towards the open space in front of the model. The subject could have walked many steps towards the camera, bathed in bright light, without hitting the umbrella. The subject was standing at the furthest away edge of the umbrella, so the center and front edge of the umbrella nearest the camera had a clear offset view of the both sides of the face from the left side, and a direct view of a silver handheld reflector in the vertical position on the right side to help fill in the shadows. Last but not least, an edge light was far behind the subject on the right side, and positioned to throw a little spill light onto the background. So there was no key light, no fill light, etc. This was a 2 light setup. As you can see, the shadows are soft and pleasing. This lighting technique is one professional photographer’s secret, so you didn’t get it from me!



Here is the “Hatchet” lighting technique. Two side edge lights, one on each side, were placed behind the subject and pointed towards the subject. A third light behind the subject was pointed towards the background. This 3 light setup gives large deep interesting shadows. In this case, the model’s head was turned to face the edge light on the right.

You have probably seen Hollywood posters of some actors using this lighting technique, except they were facing the camera. That mostly illuminates the sides of the head, and leaves the center of the face almost dark with complex shadows and a spooky otherworld look.



Exploring Digital Photography with Photonaut (cont'd)

Both images below used a key light that wasn't to the side of the camera, the key was high above the camera or subject, on the centerline between them. There was no fill light.



Here is one of my favorite lighting techniques. Reminds me of pop magazine and rock album covers of the 1970s. The key light is a spotlight that was mounted high above the camera in what is called Paramount lighting (so called because it was used by Paramount Studios for decades to make portraits of their star actors). This key light also had a grid modifier mounted on it, that gives a coherent laser like cooling effect to the light quality. Two edge lights, one on each side behind the subject, were also used in this example, so this is a 3 light setup. Notice how the shadows are very dark, and the shadow transition is sharp. This type of lighting will show every single skin defect amazingly well, so be careful who you use it on.



Last but not least, here is an example of the Clamshell lighting technique that is the same, but the opposite, of the above example. It is the same in that it used a Paramount light as the key light high above camera and closer to the model (in this case a wide rectangular light instead of a spotlight), and it used the same edge lights on both sides, as before. The main difference is the model is holding a large silver reflector horizontal to the ground just above her waist, as shown below. This image has almost no shadows, the reflector fills them in very well. It isn't totally flat looking like what you would get from an on-camera flash, but the shadows that are there are extremely soft and subtle. This 3 light setup is good at hiding most skin blemishes, and you can see this technique frequently used in and on the covers of magazines.



Club Merit Awards

Results of May 2016 Meeting

Judge: Dan Holmes

Print Only - Open:

"Lemon Split" by Chris Borel
"Searching for Sunrise" by Les Collier
"Abstract Art" by John Ferritto
"Ventura Pier" by John Ferritto
"Green Doors" by Bernie Goldstein
"Abandoned" by Albert Huen
"Color Me Bright" by Albert Huen
"Lazy River" by Albert Huen
"Brown Pelican" by Susannah Kramer
"Sierra Gold" by Susannah Kramer
"Amanda" by Ken MacGregor
"Dreaming of Hollywood" by Ken MacGregor
"Inchworm" by Roy Patience
"Weakest Link" by Israel Rios
"Aloha" by Bob Rose
"Into the Abyss" by Bob Rose
"Mighty Oak" by Bob Rose
"Erg Chebbi Dune" by Sal Santangelo
"Intrusion" by Sal Santangelo
"Lock" by Sal Santangelo
"Chaos" by Bruce Schoppe
"Polka Dots Bokeh Dots" by JP Watson



Club Merit Awards



"Abandoned" by Albert Huen



"Lazy River" by Albert Huen



Club Merit Awards



“Color Me Bright” by Albert Huen



“Polka Dots Bokeh Dots” by JP Watson



Club Merit Awards



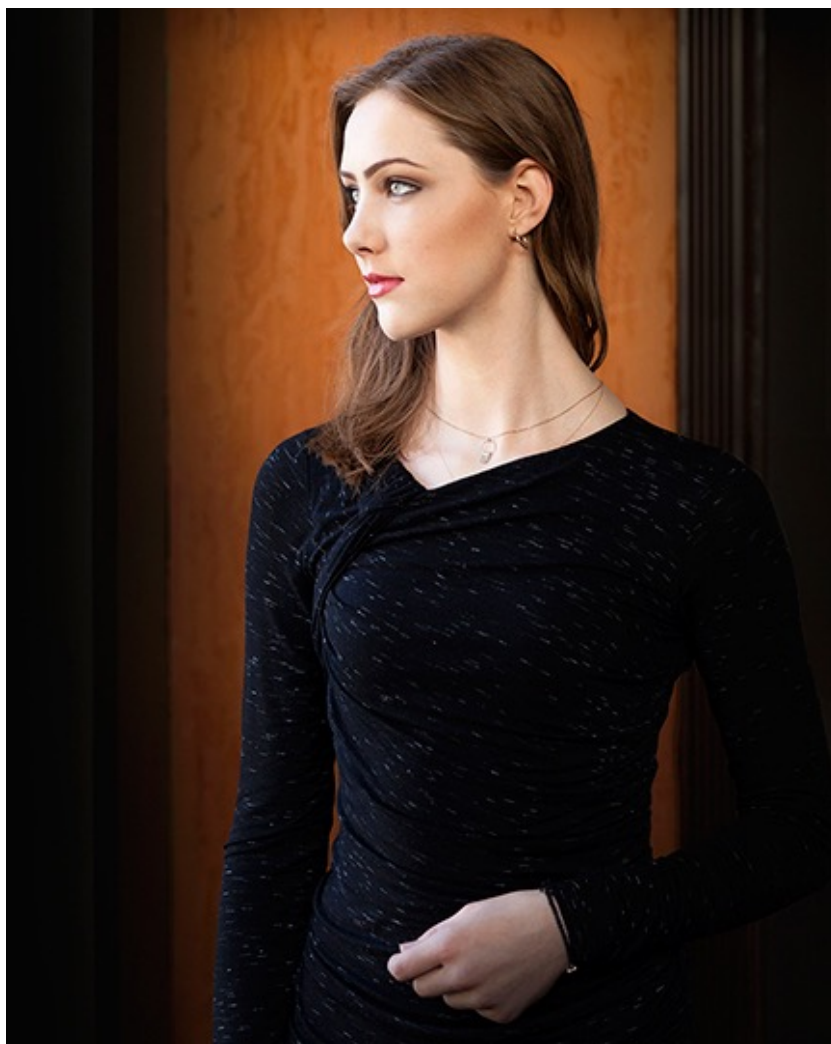
"Brown Pelican" by Susannah Kramer



"Sierra Gold" by Susannah Kramer



Club Merit Awards



"Amanda" by Ken MacGregor



Club Merit Awards



"Searching for Sunrise" by Les Collier



"Erg Chebbi Dune"
by Sal Santangelo



Club Merit Awards



“Lock” by Sal Santangelo



“Intrusion” by Sal Santangelo



Club Announcements

Trip Report

The Rain in Spain Stays Mainly on the Plain

We came home from an 18 day trip to Portugal & Spain last night. The returning flights were uneventful, but we had to be up at 3:30 am to catch the first of the two. Portugal was new to us, and Spain was a revisit while our previous trip was fairly superficial. We also spent half a day in Gibraltar and another half in Tangier. The first two days in Portugal were beautiful, followed by nine days of brief blue sky, and cloudiness to heavy rain. The rest was nice as it was supposed to be. Prof. Higgins and Eliza sang "Rain in Spain" in My Fair Lady, but the weather gods pushed it way beyond its borders.

We saw more churches and cathedrals than I could remember, and there were more wines at meals than I could ever handle. The inconvenience in the rain made it challenging to photograph. The "healing brush" in Photoshop will come in handy to remove many unwanted people at popular sites. You could wait all day for a clean shot, but people seldom cooperated. In a tour with 40 travelers, forget about waiting for the golden light. The tour leader had a schedule to follow. Each city had its unique landmarks and architecture.

We are not accustomed to Spain's 10 pm dinner. Our dinner seldom began before 8. It's so nice to return to our regular healthier early dinner at home. It was nice to learn some history. Spain had it glorious empire when the sun never set on its flag. I've learned Picasso's abstract art is somewhat like layers in Photoshop when he put his concept and symbolism as collages in his paintings/ drawings. His favorite subjects are naked ladies --- wives and mistresses. That's what some artists do.

I have a daunting task to download and pare down 1600 pictures. Hopefully some of them will turn out to be nice.

Albert



Club Announcements

Club Meeting Info:

Please come to the next meeting of the **Ventura County Camera Club** on the second Wednesday of the month...

Wednesday, June 8th, at 7 pm, Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd, Ventura CA 93003.

Our Scheduled Judge for June is: **Greg Cooper**

gcooper@brooks.edu

The assigned topic for June is: **Landscapes**

Club Workshop Info: Photographing the Night Sky

Please come to our workshop on **Wednesday, June 22nd, at 7pm** in the "Big Room" of the Poinsettia Pavilion where Pete Scifres will do a **Night Sky** photography presentation for us. If you have wondered how to make pictures that include or emphasize the night sky, this is the place to be.

Pete is an accomplished expert in this genre of photography.



Club Announcements

For Sale by Club Member:

Like new Lowepro Scope Travel 200AW bag. There are three removable and adjustable compartments for spotting scope, binoculars and a camera. It's designed for bird watchers more than photographers. There's a built-in cover to protect from rain. Will sell for \$30. Call Albert Huen at (805) 981-1499.



Like new Targus sling camera bag that holds one SLR and three lenses and accessories. You can unzip and take out the camera while still carrying this bag. Will sell for \$20. Contact Albert Huen (805) 981-1499 if interested.



Canon Top of the Line Pigment Ink Printer
PIXMA PRO-1 Printer
Purchased new May 2014.
Little used in last year.
New \$1,000 Asking \$500

Contact Bruce Schoppe

Bschoppe6698@sbcglobal.net



General Announcements

Ojai Photography Club:

Ojai, CA - The Ojai Photography Club welcomes the return of William Hendricks, Professor of Photography at Ventura College, who will share his images and speak about life in Cuba. Based on his 62 trips over the last 23 years, the presentation, "**Cuba: Then and Now,**" begins at **7:00 p.m. on June 21** at Help of Ojai's Kent Hall, 111 Santa Ana Street, Ojai, CA.

Hendricks holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Fine Arts from Brooks Institute and he has been teaching photography in the Art Department at Ventura College for the past 25 years. As both a photographer and educator, his work has taken him around the world with an array of clients and personalities. His images have been exhibited throughout the United States, with solo exhibitions in Havana, Cuba and Seoul, Korea.

Ojai Art Center:

SHADES OF GRAY - A Photography Exhibit June 4th

Here is the Call for Artists if you are interested in participating.

<http://ojaiacphoto.org/2016-annual-exhibit.html>

ENTRY DATES: June 2 from 4-7pm & June 3 from 8-10am

NICK UT

June 11th at 7pm - \$15

FOR TICKETS USE THIS LINK: <http://ojaiact.tix.com/Event.aspx?EventCode=870943>

Huynh Cong Ut, known professionally as Nick Ut, is a photographer for the Associated Press (AP) in Los Angeles. He won the 1973 Pulitzer Prize for Spot New Photography for "The Terror of War," depicting children in flight from a napalm bombing. In particular, his best-known photo features a naked 9-year-old girl, Phan Thi Kim Phuc, running toward the camera from a South Vietnamese napalm attack on North Vietnamese invaders at the Trang Bang village during the Vietnam War. On the 40th anniversary of the Pulitzer Prize-winning photo in September 2012, Ut became the third person inducted by the Leica Hall of Fame for his contributions to photojournalism.



General Announcements

Brooks Institute Workshops:

One of the most famous 4-year degree schools of photography in the entire country is right here on our doorstep! Take advantage, they are now offering to the public intensive one day extension workshops on selected subjects taught by experts in their respective field.

Website: workshops.brooks.edu

Contact Extension Workshop Coordinator: Cyndi, at: cdimicco@brooks.edu

#: 805-275-5356 **To register go to:** WWW.FISHEYECONNECT.COM

Workshop Location: Brooks Institute, 5301 N. Ventura Ave, Ventura, CA 93001

Saturday 11 Jun 2016 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM - ***"Principals of Flash Photography"***

Confused about how to use your flash? Don't like the look of your photographs when you use flash? This class and workshop is designed to change your relationship with your flash and allow you to create more beautiful and sophisticated images through the control of light. We'll cover setting up your flash and camera, both in manual and TTL mode. There will be information on how to control the exposure of your flash, especially when balancing with the available ambient light. We'll talk about using your flash off-camera and how that can make a dramatic difference in the look of your images. And there will be an introduction to different flash modifiers, like diffusion and gels, among others. Lunch and model(s) are provided and included in the fee.

Equipment: Digital SLR, flash, an off-camera sync cord or wireless trigger.

Workshop Instructor: Ralph Clevenger



Saturday 25 Jun 2016 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM - ***"Natural Light Portraiture"***



This popular one-day class and workshop will focus on the fundamentals of quality natural lighting and posing, emphasizing the basic elements of natural light indoors and outdoors. You will learn how to find high quality natural light for portraits, and practice shooting models in that light. Lunch and model(s) are provided and included in the fee.

Workshop Instructor: Tim Meyer



Club Announcements (cont'd)



Annual Membership Renewal:

Only members in good standing may submit images for judging. If necessary, please talk to **Joyce Schoppe**, our Membership Chairperson, or send an email to Joyce at:

membership@venturacountycameraclub.com

It is requested that you send your annual dues (Regular \$60, Student \$30) to:

Joyce Schoppe
4875 Mascagni St.
Ventura, CA 93003

Annual dues for new members will be prorated on a quarterly basis if joining after the first quarter. Make your check out to: "[Ventura County Camera Club, Inc.](#)" We are an incorporated nonprofit.

Instructions for Digital Projection Entries:

Please **ensure** your files are correctly labelled in accordance with the required format:

Required: **LastnameFirstname_IMAGE TITLE_month-year_category.jpg**

example... **SmithJohn_ENTER AT OWN RISK_03-16_Assigned.jpg**

Images must be emailed to: digitalentries@venturacountycameraclub.com no later than 6:00 pm by the Monday prior to the Club meeting. All images submitted for projection must be in jpg format with pixel dimensions **not to exceed: 1920 width, and/or not to exceed 1080 height, total (1920x1080)**. This is the industry standard High Definition (HD) format, and is TWICE the resolution of before.

JP's Reasons to Submit Images:

1. We pay membership dues so we can learn from having our photography critiqued. Take advantage of it!
2. It doesn't cost anything to members to submit digital images.
3. If a digital image does not earn a merit, nobody knows who it belongs to, so it's not embarrassing.
4. There is plenty of time to submit images before the monthly deadline! Images can be submitted **anytime** after the previous meeting. A whole month - you don't have to wait till the last minute!
5. We hope to view a broader variety of artistry to be critiqued.
6. Images don't have to be of the *assigned topic*. You have the choice to submit a total of 3 images in the "Open" category, if you want.

Club Announcements (cont'd)

2016 Assigned Topics List:

January:	Textures
February:	Eyes
March:	Macro (of anything)
April:	Bridges
May:	<i>No Assignment - Print Only Competition</i>
June:	Landscapes
July:	Night Lights
August:	Shadows
September:	<i>No Assignment - Print Only Competition</i>
October:	Black and White
November:	Architecture
December:	<i>No Assignment - No Meeting - Year End Comp</i>

2016 Refreshment Schedule:

January:	Sal Santangelo
February:	Ron & Sally Brubaker
March:	Bernie Goldstein
April:	Joyce Schoppe
May:	Ed Nailor
June:	Wally Olsen
July:	Albert Huen
August:	Don Hoffman & Sharon Kolsch
September:	Art Leseberg
October:	Ken MacGregor
November:	Ed Pinsky



2016 Suggested Photo Opportunities

Individuals can use this information as suggested ideas/destinations for doing their own photography. There are people in the club that have been to most of these destinations in the past few years, and can advise you on what you should expect to see if you go there...

Within 45 miles:

Loons Beach (Summerland)
El Matador Beach (Malibu)
Ventura Mission
Local Ventura Beach - Sunset
Local Ventura Surfers (waterfront promenade)
Local Downtown Ventura Architecture

Nite Shooting Downtown Ventura Main Street area
Ventura City Hall
Butterfly Grove - Santa Barbara (Nov-Feb)
Santa Barbara Zoo
Getty Museum/Center
Anacapa Island (Island Packers Ventura Marina)
Topanga Park
Santa Barbara Mission
Santa Barbara Botanical Garden

Less than 100 miles:

Hollywood at Night
Griffith Observatory at Sunset
Morrow Bay

More than 100 miles:

Pt Lobos State Beach (Monterey/Carmel)
Mono Lake
Huntington Beach
Yosemite National Park
Kings Canyon
Sequoia Park
Big Sur!



Professional Support

Below are some of the local professional photographers that have been gracious in providing their free time as judges to attend and critique member's images at our recent Club meetings. Thank you all for supporting our Club!

Sherron Sheppard:

<http://www.sherronsheppard.com> <http://www.sheppardphotography.com>

Dan Holmes Photography Workshops, Tours, and Photo Adventures:

<http://www.danholmesphoto.com/Danholmesphoto.com/Workshops.html>

Robert Fields Fine Art Travel Photography

<http://www.robertfields.com>

Mark Jansen (& Holly Higbee-Jansen) Photography and Expedition Workshops:

<http://www.jansenphotoexpeditions.com/Pages/default.aspx>

Sam and Patricia Gardner - Medici Portraiture Studio

<http://www.mediciportraiture.com/about-medici-portraiture/meet-the-artists-sam-patricia-gardner-fine-art-photographer>

Gary Moss Photography - (Gary is Photographer and Photo Editor of 805 Living Magazine)

<http://www.garymossphotography.com>

Chris Zsarnay - Z Studios

<http://www.zstudios.com>

Greg Cooper - Brooks Institute

email: gcooper@brooks.edu

Bill Hendricks - Ventura College

<http://www.hendricks-studios.com>

Matt Haines

<http://matthainesphotography.com>

Ines Roberts

<https://sites.google.com/site/ccccangle/bios/ines-roberts>

Ann Hutton

<http://www.annahuttonphotography.com/>



JP's Quick Tips:

If you don't have a remote release or wireless trigger you can use the camera's self-timer when you shoot on a tripod. Most cameras can be set to 2, 5 or 10 seconds.

Your lens sweet spot will usually be the mid-range of the aperture of your lens. Usually f8 is good and provides sharpness to the image.

When shooting a panorama sequence put your white balance on one setting so the color doesn't shift. Also, use the same aperture to keep the depth of field the same. Finally, use the same shutter speed so the brightness doesn't change.



2016 Club Officials

President:

Sal Santangelo

Vice President:

Ken MacGregor

Treasurer:

Susannah Kramer

Secretary:

Bruce Schoppe

Judge Coordinator:

Bernie Goldstein

Memberships:

Joyce Schoppe

Website:

Cassie Silva

Newsletter:

Ken MacGregor

Digital Image Entries and Projection:

JP Watson/Susannah Kramer

Publicity:

John Ferritto

Photo Opportunities:

Ron Brubaker/JP Watson