



March 2008 Volume 52, Issue 3

March Program- Photographic Composition I



Barbara Staggs taught children with Learning Disabilities at Weatherly Elementary School for over 20 years.

She became interested in photography to record her many travels with her husband, Willie. In 1995, she attended a photographic workshop in Glacier National Park which changed her view of "seeing" forever.

Shortly after that she joined HPS and started competing. She has achieved HPS Master of Photography and received the President's Top Ten Award twice. She has received several awards for Best Slide, Color Print, and Black and White Print of the Year.

She has served on the HPS Board as President and Competition VP for two years each.

She has taught Basic Photographic Composition for several years at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAH. Her program will extend over two sessions. The first one, in March, will emphasize strong center of interest, the Rule of Thirds, simple backgrounds, and the use of color. Many examples will be shown, both good and bad. Barb's second session will follow next month for the April Program.



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 - "How To" Create Surrealistic Scenes & Sensor Cleaning
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How to Create Surrealistic Scenes

by Samuel G. Shaw, FPSA, PPSA

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, surreal or surrealistic is "Having an oddly dreamlike or unreal quality." Surrealistic Scenes are just that, they are surreal, possessing a dreamlike quality and they can be produced in Photoshop® from a photograph. Such scenes do not occur in the natural world. Colors are enhanced and the details are blurred as if looking at a scene through a fog. Not every image will produce a successful surrealistic scene; in fact most will fail. In the beginning only a few attempts produce good surrealistic images. But, working with the process more and more the success rate increases. Scenic images work best with this procedure, although

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it has also been used successfully with still life images and photographs of people. The main thing to avoid is an image with large white or real light portions because during the process of underexposing, these areas go totally white and ruin the effect.

The basic process for creating surrealistic images without using Photoshop is to have two slides both underexposed, one in sharp focus and one blurred, and then sandwich the two together. A similar process is used in Photoshop to create the same effect: the main difference being that you only need one image instead of the two images required for slides. Because of the number of steps in the process and the high rate of failures I strongly recommend the use of an action so you can just press play and let the computer do the work. If the image is not up to your standards, delete it and try again. If it shows promise then tweak the settings and save the file.

Steps:

Open Image,

In the Layers palette drag the Background Layer to the "Create a New Layer Button"

Select the Background Layer

Select Layer – New Adjustment Layer - Levels

Select OK in the New Layer Dialog Box

In the Levels Dialog Box change the Input Levels from 0 1.00 255 to 0 1.00 150.

Select OK

Select the Background Copy Layer

Select Layer - Layer Style – Blending Option

Change the Blending Mode from Normal to Multiply

Select Filter – Blur - Gaussian Blur

Set the Radius to somewhere between 25 and 50 pixels or to what looks good.

Select OK

Select Layer – New Adjustment Layer – Levels

Check the "Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask" box

Select OK

In the Levels Dialog Box change the Input Levels from 0 1.00 255 to 0 1.00 200.

Select OK

You're done unless you want a little more saturation in

which case you Select Layer – New Adjustment Layer – Hue/Saturation

Select OK

Adjust Saturation to what looks good, mine is usually +25.

These steps are a starting point. Some adjustments may be required after the action is run. A little more blur or a little more sharpness may make the image look better. This can be accomplished by re-running the Gaussian Blur or by changing the white point adjustment in the Levels Dialog Box. Once you have mastered the process using the same image try using two different images, but you will need to make adjustments to the steps to make it work. The main rule for making surrealistic scenes is that there are no rules, just experiment and have fun.



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From The President

by Andrea Shetley

Happy Leap Year (that's an extra day to photograph this year) and Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Spring is on the way...I hope everyone took advantage of the winter months to get familiar with their equipment and practice techniques to be ready to photograph spring scenes. There will soon be opportunities for flower close-ups, garden and wildflower spreads, architecture with spring blooms, and so much more. Wildlife photographers should be preparing for migrating birds and animal babies. With our recent rains, hopefully the waterfalls in our area will be in better shape this year.

I was out of town again in February and so sorry I missed the program on bird photography by Herb Lewis and Jerry Green. Word got back to me that the room was filled and there was an abundance of excellent information and photographs. Herb showed and explained the set-ups he has put in around his home to attract different birds. Perhaps

this will prompt a project or two some of you will be working on this year. Jerry revealed some of his secrets to his fantastic bird photographs, which many people have been anxiously waiting to hear about in more detail.

Join us this month for "Basic Photo Composition Part 1" by Barbara Staggs. This month and next month Barbara will take us back to the beginning and show us photography basics. This will be an essential program for beginners, and an excellent refresher course for advanced and master photographers alike. Of course, there are bound to be Barbara's wonderful images to illustrate her techniques.

The February competition once again drew a good number of entries with some interesting interpretations on the topic "Angles, Lines, and Patterns." Thanks to Steve Cassiday, one of the photo lab specialists at Costco, for judging.

The competition for March is "Open," so anything goes! These are usually large competitions with a variety of subject matter. This is a chance to put in those images you have that don't fall into any of the monthly assigned topics. Come join the fun!

Workshops & Seminars:

- ♣ **Wildflower Photography Workshop**, Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Presented by Tom and Pat Cory, Saturday, April 5, 9-12:30, Boeing Education Classroom. Sign up for a fun and fact filled class about the basics of nature photography. We'll start with lectures and slide shows discussing composition, lighting and other subjects designed to help you improve your springtime photography. A section concentrating on the specific techniques of Wildflower and Close-Up photography will follow.

After the formal instruction we adjourn to the grounds of the Garden. Concurrently we will offer a session for those who would like a little help in understanding the controls on their cameras. This is a great opportunity to take spring flower photographs that you may want to enter into the photography contest sponsored by the Garden during the Spring Festival of Flowers. This workshop is perfect for photographers of all experience levels.

Tom and Pat have presented programs for HPS for many years, and this is a great opportunity to see if you would enjoy their workshops. They have several workshops scheduled in 2008 at the Tennessee Aquarium and in the Chattanooga area where they live. For more info go to www.tomandpatcory.com.

- ♣ **Gerlach Nature Photography Seminars** coming to Atlanta March 29, Birmingham March 30, and Nashville April 6. Our intensive one day seminar teaches the most important things we have learned since becoming full-time professional nature photographers in the early eighties. We have shot more than two million nature photographs with film and digital cameras and switched to all digital in 2003. This seminar is a blend of film and digital information. Most of the topics we cover such as composition, lenses, closeups, and light are equally appropriate for both film and digital.

This seminar emphasizes how to photograph birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, wildflowers, landscapes, reflections, frost, dew, fog, spider webs, waterfalls, and other subjects found in nature. All instruction is geared for those who wish to learn how to shoot outstanding nature photographs in the wild. Unlike many seminars, this program stresses how to shoot the best possible image in the camera, not how to "fix" things later with software.

We cover our working methods in detail such as back-button focusing, manual metering, using the RGB histogram for perfect exposures, fill-flash, and stress techniques for creating critically sharp images.

To help you learn everything you need to know, you'll receive detailed seminar notes at the door covering all of the instructional programs presented. These written notes include all the key points made in the seminar so you won't have to write them down plus many other useful tips. We hope you can join us! It's a rewarding day! For more info go to www.gerlachnaturephoto.com.

Checking for dust on your digital sensor

by Walt Schumacher

Digital SLRs are great, but they require a new form of camera maintenance: cleaning the sensor. The newest cameras have sensors that vibrate on startup, which helps. You can also run software to "fill in" the data lost by dust. But sooner or later, you will have to clean the sensor. This is a topic that sends many folks running!

How do you know when dust is affecting your pictures? Here's how to test it. Put your camera on Aperture priority and manual focus. Set the aperture small, like f16 or f22 (we want the dust to cast a sharp shadow). Aim at a piece of white paper or clear sky... something featureless (that's why you can't use autofocus). Purposely set your lens WAY out of focus. You don't want anything in the picture to show... just the dust. Take a picture. Put it into the computer, and

crank up the contrast. (I move the Levels sliders towards the center.) If you are unlucky, it may look like this:



How to fix? To learn the ins and outs of cleaning a digital sensor, go to www.cleaningdigitalcameras.com. This site has a lot of information, and is written by a camera repair technician. He describes the pros and cons of no less than 24 different cleaning methods! They promote a "wet" method of cleaning, using a special swab and fluid. They claim their method is the one used by the techs at Kodak, Fuji, Leica and Sony, and they guarantee this will not harm your sensor, or they will pay for the repair! You can't beat that.

What is PSA?

The Photographic Society of America is a worldwide interactive organization for anyone interested in photography, be they casual, serious amateurs, or professional photographers. It was founded in 1934 to "promote the sciences of photography and to further public education therein". As the largest photographic organization there are members in all 50 states and 60 other countries. Members include individuals, camera clubs (including HPS), camera councils, chapters, libraries, and other photographic organizations.

PSA offers a monthly magazine, competitions, study groups, circuits, advisers, travel aides, programs, an internet site, an annual conference, and many other services. Most importantly, it acts as the "glue" that ties together national and international photographic organizations and exhibitions. PSA recognizes and bestows credit to individual photographers for their accomplishments throughout the world. PSA awards Associates, Fellows, honorary members, many exhibition proficiency levels, and other special awards. Future issues of our HPS newsletter will look closer at some of the activities of PSA.

For additional info go to www.PSA-photo.org.



Member Announcements & Congrats!

- ♣ Walt Schumacher recently won an "Award of Distinction" (and \$100 prize) for a photograph at the Huntsville Art League's Collectors Draw fund raiser. This is an annual event where the artist donates their photo. The picture was a 5-foot long print of a series of tiny pots... originally taken for an HPS lecture last year.
- ♣ Lee Pratt has received the rating of Master Stereographer, Level 5 from the Photographic Society of America. This represents over 863 total acceptances from at least 245 different stereo images in PSA recognized stereo exhibitions.

Rules for Monthly Competitions - Prints

All members are reminded to use a backing board (i.e. mat board, foam board, etc.) for all prints regardless of whether they are matted on top, and to mark the back of the print with their name and an orientation arrow showing the upright position of the entry. Please see the HPS website for a full list of the competition rules. Contact a board member, listed on the last page of the newsletter, if clarification is needed.

Discounts for HPS Members:

Did you know? Walgreens gives a 15% professional discount to HPS members.

See Dave McGuiness, Treasurer, if you have paid your 2008 dues and do not have a 2008 membership card.

Welcome New Members!

Jeremy Nuckols Gene Zajicek
Miranda Joyner

CREATIVE CRUD COMPETITION (or Dollar Tree Photoshootout) *By Barbara Staggs*

Here's a fun way to get your creative juices flowing. The next "photoshootout" competition challenges you to improve your creative "in-camera" skills by using a Dollar Tree object.

RULES

- ⇒ Sign up will be either at the Feb. 25 meeting or the March 10 meeting. At this time each participant will pay \$1.00.
- ⇒ At the March 24 meeting each participant will receive one Dollar Tree object by drawing a number corresponding to the object. (No two objects will be alike.)
- ⇒ You are allowed to take as many photos as you wish but may only enter four. The first one should be a straight photo of the object (this will not be judged. The purpose is to show what the object is.)
- ⇒ In the other 3 photos you may use the whole object or

part of the object. It does not even have to be recognizable nor does it have to be the subject of the photo. The photo does not have to show the object's intended use.

- ⇒ Your creativity should take place in the camera, not in Photoshop or other such program. You may use these programs for basic corrections such as cropping and Levels but you may not use filters or major color alterations.
- ⇒ The four photos should be entered into the competition by submitting a CD at or before the April 14 meeting or by submitting via e-mail by April 14 to staggwh@ro.com using the same submission standards as you use for the monthly competitions: JPG images, maximum width is 1024 pixels, maximum height is 768 pixels, file size must be less than 800 kilobytes. File name must be: first and last name with no spaces, dash, then entry number. Example: WillieStaggs-1.jpg

The photos will be judged for creativity and composition. Each participant's images will be shown as part of the May 12 Program Meeting.

For Sale:

Canon 20D body, excellent condition
Refurbished by Canon 8 months ago. All packages, software, manuals, cables, charger and extra battery included.
Asking \$425.00
Henry Smith – 881-4214
hsmith33@csc.com

What's really important is to simplify. The work of most photographers would be improved immensely if they could do one thing: get rid of the extraneous. If you strive for simplicity, you are more likely to reach the viewer. - William Albert Allard

MARCH 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7 New Moon	8
9	10 HPS Program – Photo Composition	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Digital Pics Due NPS Meeting	18	19	20	21 Raptor Demonstration Full Moon	22
23	24 HPS Competition – Subject: Open	25	26	27 Apr Newsletter Deadline	28	29 Gerlach Seminar Atlanta
30 Gerlach Seminar Birmingham	31 Members Forum Night					

Submission Deadline for April Newsletter

Please send articles/info by Thursday, March 27 to
hpsnewsletter@yahoo.com.

Photographic Opportunities:

Southeastern Raptor Center Demonstration at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Friday, March 21, 11:00 and Noon Shows, at the Boeing-Toyota Amphitheatre. The Gardens is excited to announce the return of the Southeastern Raptor Center from the Auburn School of Veterinary Medicine. They will present an education and entertaining talk and demonstration. Experts from the Center will be in attendance with several of the large birds and will allow some very close-up photography of birds that would otherwise require a long lens.

March Judge

Mr. Farley Vaughn has been a photographer in the Huntsville area since 1959. He attended Florence State Teachers college where he took as many photography classes as possible. He was director of Photography with the Huntsville Times for 15 years. In 1974 he opened his own business doing commercial work and weddings. He later focused his talents solely on weddings and portraits. He did over 2,500 weddings throughout his career. He reluctantly retired in 2001 due to leukemia and lymphoma. He is currently in remission although neuropathy has caused him not to be able to continue his love of photography as he would like. He currently works as an instructor and photographic consultant for Wolf Camera. In his spare time he enjoys doing scenic photography.

Huntsville Photographic Society

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A member organization of P.S.A. and the Arts Council



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See Cover Story, How To Create
Surrealist Scenes.

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Website for Digital Competition results: www.HSPPhotos.smugmug.com

Club Website: www.huntsvillephotographicsociety.org

Meeting Information:

HPS meets the second and fourth Mondays of the month, 7:00 p.m., at the Huntsville/Madison Library-
Main Branch, 915 Monroe St., in Huntsville.

Annual Membership Dues: \$20.00 due Jan 1st (\$18.00 if renewal paid before start of the Calendar year).

Membership required to submit entries in monthly competitions.