

April 2023 Newsletter

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Photo by Carole Barnard

APC ACTIVITIES

Next Meeting

April 17, 2023

7:00pm First Baptist Church

Programs

May 15, 2023

David Hall

July 17, 2023

TBD

Sep. 18, 2023

Ciara Wilder Massingale
(Wilder Uwharrie Photography)

Nov. 20, 2023

Bob Finley

Exhibits

Apr. 7 - July 21

Center for Creative Leadership

2023 PhotoShows

April 17, 2023

Photographer's Choice

June 19, 2023

Macro/'Up Close'

Aug. 21, 2023

Action

Oct. 16, 2023

People at Work

Field Trips

Q1 2023

Duke Chapel

Q2 2023

Burl. Arboretum/City Park

Q3 2023

Duke Homestead

Q4 2023

TBD

President's Comments—April 2023

By Keith O'Leary

Spring is in the air! Glad to see temps are finally starting to rise...and perhaps provide more opportunities for us to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

Thanks to Daniel Walker for an informative presentation last month on Photo Composition and contrasting differences between three famous photographers. This month we will be seeking submissions for the April PhotoShow that *everyone* can participate in: 'Photographer's Choice'.

Our exhibit at CCL begins on April 7th and I hope you are making plans now to attend and invite others to the reception there on Friday April 28th from 5:00-7:00.

Also looking forward to starting our monthly socials back. Our new social group will be called 'Table Talkers' and you can find more details about our April get-together later in the newsletter.

I also encourage you to check out our website at www.alamancephoto.com and particularly the Galleries tab where you can view photos taken by other club members. I am really impressed with the talent we have in our club! Thanks for your participation in making this a great club.

Happy shooting!

Keith

APC BOARD

President	Keith O'Leary	Exhibit Chair	Angela Bostek
Vice President	John Reich	Outings/Field Trips	Hugh Comfort
Secretary	George Siple	Membership	Ken Sellers
Treasurer	Dianne Sellers	Web Master	Christie O'Leary
PhotoShow Chair	Dick Schenck	Editor	Ray Munns

Membership Corner

Ken Sellers

As we begin a new membership year, think about this, "How can we let others know about the APC and all the opportunities that accompany a membership?" One easy way is to invite a friend to attend. Anyone can visit up to 2 months without joining. Encourage others to view our website and Facebook page. Either suggestion will give potential members a good overview of what we do and, like the upcoming exhibit at CCL, some of the events we, as members, have to share our photographs with others.

Ken Sellers
Membership Chair



Table Talkers



Join us for lunch on Wednesday, April 19th
Southbound Sandwich Works, Correct Time Plaza
3328 S. Church St. in Burlington at 12:00 noon!

No agenda, no program, no music, just friendly conversation with fellow photographers. Spouses of members are always welcome.

Come in, order and join us in the side room.

Looking forward to seeing you April 19 at noon!



APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns (raymunns@bellsouth.net) no later than the 20th of each month. Please include your name, contact info (phone and/or email) and if each item is for sale or something you are looking to purchase. Also notify Ray when items should be removed from the newsletter.

For Sale

Manfrotto tripod and ball head with quick release. This combination cost over \$200 new. A used one on eBay starts at \$135. I will consider any reasonable offer.

Contact Dick Schenck 919-968-8757

For Sale

Nikon Lens 200-500 mm VR ED F5 \$900
Nikon D5000 Camera with 2 batteries \$300
Both Lens and Camera \$1000

Contact Mio Winkle 787-587-5989

For Sale

8" LED Ring Light with 3 light modes and variable brightness control. Includes large velvet drawstring pouch, tripod stand, clamp-on base, mobile phone holder and remote control. Charges via USB.

Contact Keith O'Leary @ 336.693.8268 or videoman@triad.rr.com.

For Sale

Item 1 - Nikon AF-S DX NIKKOR 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR II Lens - \$350.00 (cash)

Item 2 - Tamron 90mm f/2.8 SP AF Di Macro Lens for Nikon AF - \$350.00 (cash)

Special Deal - Buy both lenses above together for \$600.00 (cash) and it will include:

- A) Nikon D300 SLR Camera with 2 batteries and charger
- B) Nikon SB 600 Speedlight
- C) 12 Eneloop AA rechargeable batteries w/charger
- D) 72 mm polarizing lens
- E) Camera bag for above items

Contact Leonard Barnard 336-270-3194



WEBMASTER NOTES

The APC Website Gallery is open for new photos!

Members can begin sending photos to alamancephoto@gmail.com for the gallery. Each member who submits photographs will have a personal slideshow on the website.

If you have photos in the gallery now, you are welcome to submit new images to replace the existing ones.

After submission, I will send a confirmation email. If you have NOT received a confirmation email within a WEEK, please let us know at alamancephoto@gmail.com.

We encourage ALL members to submit photographs for the club's website gallery and would like to see EVERYONE represented!

Submission Details

Number of photos: no more than 20

Size of each photo: 1 to 2 MB preferred. Max. size 10 MB

Format: .jpg

File naming:

Please rename your photo submissions in the following format:

Firstname.lastname_01 or _20 (*per order you want them to be shown in your slideshow*)

For example: john.doe_01.jpg john.doe_20.jpg

Your '01' photo will be used as the thumbnail on the Gallery Page.

Email:

Email Address: Send all photos to alamancephoto@gmail.com

Email Subject Line: Please include gallery photos and your name

For example: Gallery photos - John Doe

Entry Deadline: April 30th, 2023

Please Note:

Any submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines above may be returned.

Looking forward to the 2023 gallery,

Christie O'Leary

Webmaster

Q2 Group Field Trip: Burlington Arboretum/City Park

This group field trip will take place on **Saturday, April 29** at the Burlington Arboretum (408 E. Willowbrook Drive) and The Burlington City Park and Amusement Area (located nearby off South Church Street). While most of us are familiar with the Park, the Arboretum may not be as well known. With good weather, both sites should provide ample opportunities for interesting and beautiful photos.

The Arboretum at Willowbrook Park features a wide, paved walking path that meanders the length of this 17-acre park. The arboretum is full of plant collections including daylilies, hostas, azaleas, roses, hydrangeas, camellias, wetland gardens and more. A creek runs through the park with a wide vegetation buffer brimming with native plants and grasses that provide habitat for wildlife and filters storm water runoff protecting the water quality of the creek.

The flagship of the Burlington Parks System, City Park, offers more than 75 acres of activities for the entire family. It serves as the home of an amusement area, one of only a handful of municipally operated in the state. A fully restored Dentzel Carousel is the highlight of the amusement area.

More information for both can be found at <https://www.burlingtonnc.gov/1316/Parks>.

CCL Display Opportunity

The APC exhibit, "The Photographer's Eye", at the Center for Creative Leadership will open on Friday, April 7th. The reception will be held on April 28th from 5-7pm.

Our exhibit includes just over 85 images from 19 of our club photographers.

If you are unable to join us at the reception, you may view the exhibit by appointment on Fridays through July 21, 2023. Please call 336-708-2495 to schedule a time.

CCL's address is One Leadership Place, Greensboro.

Angela Bostek

April 17th PhotoShow – “Photographer's Choice”

Dick Schenck, PhotoShow Chair

We encourage ALL members to submit photographs for our bi-monthly Photo Show and would like to see EVERYONE represented!

We try not to exceed 50 photos per show. Therefore, we ask that you submit a maximum of three (3) photos. We may only use one or two of your photos based on the number of entries so PLEASE indicate your preferred photo in the file name of each photo (01, 02 or 03; see naming information below). If you have any issues with formatting or submitting, please let us know at apcphotoshow@gmail.com and we will be happy to assist. Also let us know if your submitted photo is not acknowledged within a few days and/or by the deadline.

Submission Details

Number of Entries:

Max of three (3) entries per member. Please indicate your preferred photo with number 01, 02, or 03.

Size:

No larger than 25 MB.

Preferred minimum size is 1024 x 768.

Format:

.jpg

File Naming:

Please rename your photo submissions using the following format:

Firstname.lastname_01, _02 or _03 (*per use preference*)

Example: john.doe_01.jpg john.doe_02.jpg john.doe_03.jpg

Email:

Email Address: Send all images to apcphotoshow@gmail.com

Email Subject Line: Include the month of the PhotoShow and your name.

Example: Photos for April Photoshow – John Doe

Entry Deadline:

5:30 PM on Monday, April 10, 2023.

Please Note:

Submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines above may be returned.

Don't forget: Photos may be submitted early for the following show!

Photographing Early Blooming Spring Flowers

Joe Petersburger

Early blooming flowers provide plenty of opportunities to take great pictures in spring. The variety of colors and species available make for endless creative possibilities. We are also more sensitive to colors after a less saturated winter.

Of course, there is always an impulse to imitate pictures we have seen and liked, pictures that inspired us to discover nature by trying photography. This is part of the evaluation process, but do not forget those images have been done. If you want your own successes, try to avoid the classics! Try to find another approach. Flowers are good subjects, since they do not fly or run away.



Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length, ISO 100, f/5.6, 1/6 sec.

Where to Start?

One very fine example of an early blooming flower is liverwort (*Hepatica nobilis*). It is a very popular subject and has been photographed many, many times. With especially over-exposed subjects—or just in general—take your time. Sometimes I just lie down on the ground beside some flowers and try to get used to them. I do some snapshots to have an idea about the necessary exposure time, f-stop, and focal length. Just a good shot of a flower will not attract too many fans or clients. Luckily, this species develops several flowers at the same time, so you can play with a repeating subject in the frame. They do not have to be “twins.” One sharp image is enough; the others can be blurry in the foreground or background. I strongly believe that this picture (next page) has been taken and sold so many times specifically because of these guidelines.

Photographing Early Blooming Spring Flowers . . . Continued

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length, ISO 160, f/32, 3.2 sec.



The subject does not have to be completely visible. Just like in many other cases, less can be more. It took me many years of taking pictures of liverwort to find a situation like that—flowers behind the lace of a partially decomposed beech tree leaf. At first, it looked like a miracle for me. If you want to find a situation like that, you should walk along a stream. Leaves can decompose perfectly in water during winter and the level of streams can dramatically change. If these leaves get on dry land, they can be blown away by the wind until they find themselves in your perfect shot.

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length, ISO 800, f/2.8, 1/250 sec.



What's Your Angle?

Finding the right angle can take a lot of time! For example, taking a picture of a wood violet (*Viola odorata*) is quite difficult. It has a fantastic odor, but as a photographer, I cannot do anything with that! Flowers with short stems facing to the side instead of upwards can get lost in the undergrowth. So it is better to use a longer focal length. I try to focus on a nice looking, complete flower.

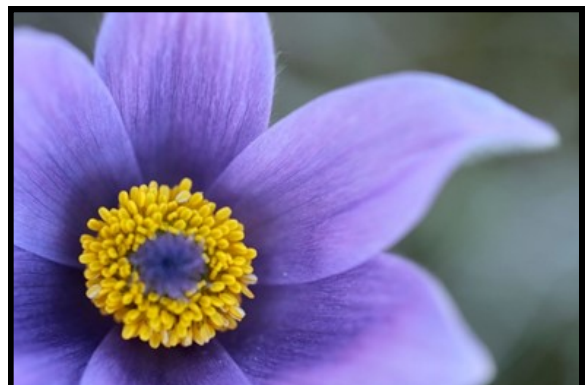
Photographing Early Blooming Spring Flowers . . . Continued

Here is the next question: where to focus? Because this flower is not “flat,” it is critical to find a good focal point, where viewers’ eyes can rest. It is good to find something with significant contrast. With this example, the wood violet’s pattern (previous page) bears additional information you can write about: it helps provide the right path for pollinators, directing them toward the nectar and pollen.

*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length,
ISO 400, f/2.8, 1/640 sec.*



If you have a species or specimen with a straight, upright flower, you might consider it an opportunity to explore the “levitation effect”. Coltsfoot is a typical example for that. In this case, try shooting from completely over the flower, with the axis of the lens aligned with the stem. You can check by carefully focusing from the flower to the ground. If you do not see the stem anywhere, you’re lined up. Use the smallest amount of f-stop, if you can. I prefer lenses that start at 2.8, but this is not the only solution. You need to be especially careful in this case to show the characteristics of the flower. You might use f8.0 or even more, especially in the case of a long stem. However, it is better to use 2.8 with careful focus to have a blurry background, which gives the levitation effect.



Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length, ISO 400, f/2.8, 1/500 sec. (left) 1/250 sec. (right)

Photographing Early Blooming Spring Flowers . . . Continued

How Close Should You Get?

The desired closeness of the shot really depends on what you would like to do with it. Do you want to send the pictures to a contest, upload your images to a social media platform, or sell them to an agency? Never forget that clients prefer copy space in their photos. So if you want to sell them, you should leave as much space as possible around the flower. As a guideline I would say it is better to leave at least one third of the frame empty.

*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length,
ISO 400, f/14, 1/250 sec.*



On the other hand, you can go as far as to leave only one quarter for the subject. However, adhering to a specific ratio is not nearly as important as keeping the object attractive in the picture. Agencies and clients are not really interested in shots where they need to add copy space with Photoshop. It is just easier to crop than to add. Moreover, a growing number of contests allow cropping. Do not forget, sometimes part of the flower tells more or is just more exciting than the complete one.



*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 65mm focal length,
ISO 200, f/4.5, 1/250 sec.*

If you want to take the perfect, most highly desired shot, which is obviously eye-catching and raises a lot of likes or wins an award, you must forget about copy space. Just do the best you can, but try not to forget to take some distant shots as well, especially if the same species can be found in a mass in a nice environment. Wide-angle shots can be really dramatic and tell a completely different story.

*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length,
ISO 250, f/5, 1/15 sec.*



Photographing Early Blooming Spring Flowers . . . Continued

When is Best?

Though unexpected, even flowers have their own behaviors. Study that too! Many of them do not open their petals in early morning, like liverwort or crocus species. The blooms of many species depend on the temperature—some can close their petals even during the



day—while others act strictly according to their daily rhythms. However, unlike liverwort, crocus can be a really exciting subject with closed petals. Spring meadow saffron (*Crocus reticulatus*) is especially so, as it has lines outside that are not so visible with open petals. If you catch them on a humid morning, there will be lots of details to see in the frame!

Note: Full bloom is not the most attractive stage all the time. Sometimes a picture is even more catching and unusual with closed petals.

*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length,
ISO 800, f/2.8, 1/500 sec.*

What's the Right Light?

There are plenty of opportunities to experiment with light and its effects, since flowers do not run away. You can play with the light! Many people try to shoot flowers in full, direct light, but just because there is sunshine in spring bringing the flowers to bloom does not mean that is the only option. I always suggest seeing the same subject in diffused light.

*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length,
ISO 400, f/5.6, 1/160 sec.*



Photographing Early Blooming Spring Flowers . . . Continued

Many times I create shadows with my own body. Interesting pictures can result if the object is in shadow but the background is in sunshine. You need to be careful about the right exposure, but the result can be remarkable. Color temperatures are different, and these kinds of images are still rare.



*Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 100mm focal length,
ISO 100, f/2.8, 1/2500 sec.*

Find backlight or create it with a strobe! I always try to do so, especially with flowers where most of the petals are thin and a bit transparent. These can create amazing results, but be sure the image is underexposed.

What Comes Next?

Preparation and planning are very important, even if you just go out to the forest spontaneously. Be prepared for the species you wish to photograph—when and where do they bloom? Plan your equipment as well—you do not need your complete arsenal, but it's better to have a bit more than less. Do not forget that in cases of macro-photography you need to have pin-sharp details (in most cases), where the viewer can focus. So be sure you have the right accessories with you: strobe, tripod, monopod, and beanbag.

Composition is the soul of the picture. Compose with a handheld at first, and then fix your camera for the shot. Finally, play with the light! Whatever you have in the moment might be perfect, but there are plenty of opportunities to make your picture more attractive by creating shadow or backlighting. Ultimately, the right light, angle, zoom, and framing are determined by your eye, your intentions, and your subject. So, get snapping!

Frequently Asked Questions about Long Exposure Photography and Their Answers

By Christian Hoiberg



There's no doubt that Long Exposure Photography is a popular technique amongst landscape photographers. It's the subject of my best-selling eBook, it's the subject of several of our most popular articles and it's the subject of most questions I receive through our newsletter.

It's easy to understand why it's become such a popular technique. After just a few attempts you see just how big of an impact the choice of shutter speed has on your photos. Even small changes can make a significant difference.

Below I've collected some of the most frequently asked questions about long exposure photography, and the answers to them:

#1 Does a Slower Shutter Speed Mean More Detail Will be Captured?

No. Using a slower shutter speed does not mean that you get more details or a sharper image. In fact, the long exposure will blur out certain elements and hence have fewer details in some areas.

If you want to capture more details, you should consider implementing the Expose to the Right (ETTR) technique. Simply put, this technique is based on exposing an image on the bright side but without clipping any highlights.

Doing so brings out more details in the shadows and gives you "more room to play".

Frequently Asked Questions about Long Exposure Photography . . . Continued

#2 Do I Need a Remote Shutter for Long Exposure Photography?

No. You do not need a remote shutter for long exposure photography. However, it will be beneficial to have in many scenarios.

You can use your camera's delayed shutter instead of a remote shutter release. This will work perfectly in most cases except for when:

- You're photographing waves and need to capture an image at that exact moment
- When working with Bulb Mode and doing exposure times longer than 30 seconds (note that some cameras allow longer shutter speeds than 30 seconds)



#3 Can I Capture Long Exposures Without Filters?

Yes. You can do Long Exposure Photography without filters.

Filters are used to reduce the amount of light reaching the sensor in a given time, which means you'll need to lengthen the exposure time in order to get a correctly exposed image. However, you are able to use a semi-slow shutter speed without filters as well.

In order to do so, you'll need to follow a couple of steps:

- Use a narrow aperture (such as f/22)
- Use the lowest possible ISO
- Photograph when the sun is positioned low in the sky and it's becoming darker

It's nearly impossible to achieve a slow shutter speed without using filters when you're photographing during the daytime.



Frequently Asked Questions about Long Exposure Photography . . . Continued

#4 Can I Replicate Long Exposure Photography Effects in Post-Processing?

Yes. The effect of a slow shutter speed can be replicated to some extent. It will look slightly different and require more work from you in the field, but here are the steps to follow:

- Capture a bunch of images from the same perspective (the more you, have the more “long exposure” the effect will look)
- Open all the images as layers in Photoshop
- Duplicate the first layer and place it on top of all others
- Go to Edit -> Align -> Auto-Align Layers
- Select all layers except for the top duplicated layer and Convert to Smart Objects
- Place the Smart Object on top of the other layer and go to Layers -> Smart Objects -> Stack Mode -> Mean (this creates the Long Exposure effect)
- Use a mask to blend the two images together

As you can see, the effect does not look as good as actually capturing a Long Exposure. However, this technique can be used if you, for example, aren't able to use a tripod.

#5 Is There a Correct Shutter Speed for Long Exposure Photography?

No. There is no correct shutter speed for Long Exposure Photography. The ideal shutter speed depends on the subject you're photographing and how you wish to portray it.

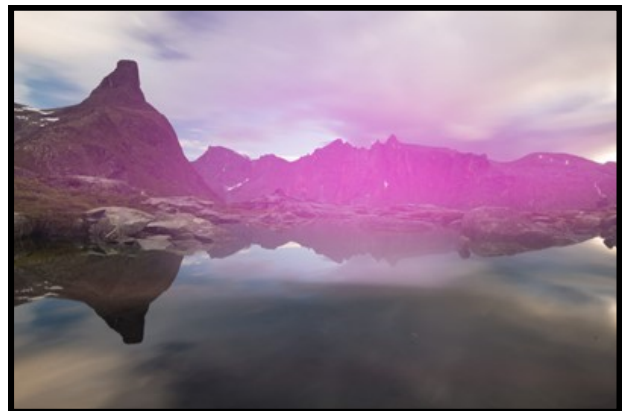
It's your creative decision as an artist to choose the shutter speed you prefer for this scene. Knowing roughly how long becomes easier as you become more experienced with working on this technique.

#6 There's a Micolor in the Photo Center When Photographing Long Exposures. Why?

This is a well-known issue for DSLR photographers using long exposure times. Especially when the shutter speed extends a minute or more.

The reason for this miscolor is that light leaks in through the viewfinder and reflects on the mirror and sensor.

Luckily, the solution is quite simple: cover the viewfinder. You can use a finger, a piece of paper, your lens cap, or anything else. Just make sure the viewfinder is properly covered. Some cameras even have a built-in viewfinder cover.



Frequently Asked Questions about Long Exposure Photography . . . Continued

#7 Why Are My Images Out of Focus When Using Filters?

Neutral Density filters are darkened glass placed in front of the lens. The darker the filter is, the less your camera “sees”, hence why we need a longer exposure time to capture a well-exposed image.

The main problem with your camera seeing less is that it has a hard time focusing. With dark filters, it’s almost impossible for your camera’s autofocus functions to work properly (though this is getting better and better).

This is why we have to use additional steps when focusing during long exposures:

1. Set up your composition
2. Focus (using autofocus or manual focus)
3. Lock your focus by switching the lens to manual focus
4. Place the Neutral Density filter in front of the lens
5. Adjust your shutter speed (don’t touch aperture or ISO – these should already be set)
6. Take the photo

By following those few steps you can ensure that your images stay in focus, no matter how long the shutter speed is.

#8 How Do I Know the Right Shutter Speed with ND Filters?

Calculating the correct shutter speed when you’re using Neutral Density filters can be tricky. Especially in the beginning. When you get more used to photographing with them, you quickly learn approximately what shutter speed you need based on the density of the filter and the light conditions outside.

When you’re first getting started, however, you don’t have many references and it’s hard to know exactly what to use. There are certain formulas you can follow to calculate the correct shutter speeds but instead of teaching you the math, I’ll share with you a way easier solution: **download an exposure calculator app on your phone.**

These apps take into consideration the aperture and ISO, the before shutter speed, and the filter you’re going to use. Based on those inputs, you get an accurate answer on what shutter speed you should be using.

The NiSi ND Calculator is a good and easy-to-use app that I recommend.

Top 12 Image Editing Skills Every Photographer Should Know

By John Huegel

Before you start editing, make sure that you have a good image work flow. This means saving originals in a separate place to prevent you from damaging or destroying the original image. And get familiar with your program's UNDO capability—usually the Ctrl-Z key is a shortcut to undo the most recent image change. Don't forget Save As, which allows you to save a copy of the image with another name so you don't disturb the original.

*Photo by Shawn Clover; ISO 100, f/8,
1/60-second exposure*



Crop. This tool allows you to remove some of the image. Generally, you shape a rectangle around the area you want to keep and the rest is removed. The area inside the rectangle becomes your new image. Related to this tool are the rotate and straighten tools. Rotate allows you to rotate the image, and Straighten does a similar task, allowing you to specify a horizon line or reference point. I recommend to rotate first and then crop after you have the proper orientation.

Brightness and Contrast. This tool lets you increase or decrease the relationship between brights and darks (contrast), and increase or decrease the overall brightness of the image. Combinations of brightness and contrast settings can have very dramatic impact to your image, adding extra “punch” or softening the visual impact. It can also add emphasis to sunsets and other scenic shots. If your image appears flat or dull, this is a good tool to try.

Top 12 Image Editing Skills Every Photographer Should Know . . . Continued

Saturation. This tool is used to increase the color of an image. Used to excess, the result can be artificial, and skin tones can be made to look unnatural. But for floral and outdoor images, this tool can be used to sweeten the color impact of an image.

Resize. This tool is used to change the size and number of pixels, or image dots, in an image file. When sending something to a website for instance, you may want to reduce the image size so that it does not take too long to load. When sending an image to be printed on a large size, you may want to size it larger. Many programs will try to fill in the missing spaces if you attempt to resize an image beyond its original pixel dimensions. Called interpolation, this program can deliver mixed results if you are trying to increase the image's size too far beyond its original dimensions. Combined with Crop, this is a good way to preview and prepare an image to be printed in a specific paper size.

Color Temperature/Color Adjust. This tool lets you adjust the image's color temperature. If your camera's white balance was not matched up to the color temperature of the predominant light source, the resulting image can have a color cast that is undesirable. Using this tool, you can choose either color neutral selection (white or grey) in the photo and let the tool shift the color balance to match, or you tweak some settings or sliders to make the image "warmer" or "cooler". It's better to get it right in the camera, but this tool can help rescue photos that otherwise have improper color casts.



Photo by Farrukh

Curves and Levels. These tools are a more sophisticated version of the Brightness and Contrast tools. Levels allows you to change the white, mid and black points of an image and it will shift the image accordingly. It is useful in pushing darks darker, whites whiter, and adding some lightness to midtones. It is useful to bring up skin tones on faces while keeping very bright elements unchanged. Curves is even more flexible, where you can describe a very sophisticated transformation of the original image's characteristics. These tools can also be used to excess, often resulting in surreal or abnormal in appearance.

Top 12 Image Editing Skills Every Photographer Should Know . . . Continued

Clone/Rubber Stamp. This tool lets you remove items from the image or otherwise re-touch the image. For example if you have a telephone pole in an otherwise perfect rural image, you can use this tool to duplicate the part of the picture next to the pole and paint over the pole with that section. With some practice, you can edit out glare on glasses, braces, background objects and much more. Related tools include Scratch Remover and Object Remover in some programs.

Eraser. This tool lets you remove sections of an image. This leaves behind a blank spot or hole. It's useful to isolate an object to place on another image, for example, to cut out a person so you can drop them into a location that was not in the original image. A variant of this tool is the Background Eraser.

Layers. Learning to use layers opens up an entirely new world in editing. Basically you create two or more overlays that can have varying amounts of transparency so that you create a new image combining parts of these layers. You can specify how the layers interact with each other, so that one may enhance the color of another. That feature is called the "blend mode". You can also use layers to superimpose items on each other, for example to put your subject in a new location.

Sharpen. This tool lets you increase the edge contrast of the image, which makes small features stand out more. You will generally sharpen only as a last step after resizing, because sharpening emphasis will change with the image size. You can selectively sharpen parts of the images, such as eyes, to draw attention to them. You can also apply a sharpening to the overall image. The Unsharp Mask will let you specify just how small and how much to apply the sharpening effect.

Photo by Kokorowa Shinjin



Top 12 Image Editing Skills Every Photographer Should Know . . . Continued

Channel Mixer. This is a tool that allows you to change the amount of red, green and blue in the image. But its real value is in being able to tailor a black and white conversion to include specific amounts of red, green and blue. If you choose “monochrome” as the output, you can mix the red, green and blue channels to bring out features that a straight black and white conversion will not be able to do. The defaults include 33% each of red, blue and green. Experiment with 80%/10%/10% of various modes and see how elements like bricks or blue sky or green leaves will change from dark to light in relation to other objects in the image.

1-Step Fix/Smart Fix. This tool often combines much of the above tools into an easy to use dialog that will let you play with many things at once to improve an image. Even if you use this tool most of the time, remember that the individual elements above can be utilized individually to create image enhancements that the simpler tools cannot provide.

Want to learn more? Take a handful of images that you are not totally pleased with, and spend some time using each tool to see how you can expand your creative and editing skills to produce truly great works of photographic art!

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