

REFLECTIONS



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STONY BROOK CAMERA CLUB

VOLUME 38 NUMBER 3

April/June 2012



Letter from the President: *Tony Mistretta*

Spring is always an exciting time to photograph. There are colorful flowers and trees, sporting events, and people that come out of their homes to enjoy the fresh outdoors. Spring came early this year, which gave us more opportunities to get outdoors and take advantage of the unusually warm weather. If you like to shoot spring flowers, you must plan and act quickly when they bloom, because each species is at peak for only a short time, often for just a few days. Try to be an early riser to get there when the light is at its best and there is a better chance of calm (lack of wind). If you're lucky enough to have a day with thin diffuse cloud cover, you'll be in photographers' heaven, because those clouds will work like a big softbox for you. If you're not so lucky and find your subjects under harsh direct sunlight, you can always bring your own diffuser like the ones that are built into those circular foldable reflectors. And if you get a particularly windy day that is common in the Spring, you will have to consider some way to either block the wind, make it work to your advantage or bring your subject indoors.

As the club year draws to a close, this will be my last letter as your club president. I am grateful to have had this opportunity to serve the club, and I am also grateful to the people who have helped organize so many successful club evenings and events. We've enjoyed some great outside speakers, challenging competitions, adventurous field trips and many other personal growth experiences. All of this could not have happened if it were not for the committees and club members who put time and effort into planning and organizing them.

Stony Brook Camera Club is well known for our talented members. We have made a reputable name for ourselves in the photographic community. This didn't just happen overnight – it came from years of dedication by all of our members who strive day in and day out to create the images of our dreams. Be proud of the legacy to which you belong, and let it give you sustained inspiration to live up to its name.

Looking ahead, I'm glad to see that many of you have signed up for the NECCC summer conference in Amherst again this year. While I personally will not make this one, I have attended in several past years, and I can say that each one has been a most beneficial and fun experience. Be sure to study the program and plan to attend as many educational sessions as you can fit in. This is also a chance to spend time with your fellow club members and members of other clubs, all of whom share your interest and passion for photography. On top of all this, there are opportunities to shoot at various set-ups and/or try out a new camera or lens for an hour.

Photography is more than taking photos, it's a philosophy of life. I must confess, I didn't just make that up. I read it in an article that listed 100 tips from a professional and street photographer, Eric Kim. I keep going back to the article because I think it has great insight and embodies a philosophy what I want to adopt as my own. You may read the article [here](#).

In this issue-

Words of Wisdom from Image Study	2
Expressive Photography-Andre Gallant	3-4
Garden Photography in New England	4
Quad Winners	5
Tricks of the Trade - Layers SIG	5
Basic Camera Set-up in HDR	6-7
Club Calendar	8
Upcoming Conferences	8



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Color Slides Mike DiStefano
B&W Prints Bob Doyle
Color Prints Rob DeRobertis
Digital Ann Bertulli, Denise Duhamel
PSA/NECC Rob DeRobertis
Quad Robert Lehanka

MEETINGS: Meetings will be held every Thursday of each month; no meetings in July and August. Consult SBCC Calendar of Events. All meetings start at 7:30 P.M. The regular meeting place is the Wrentham Senior Center, 400 Taunton Street, Wrentham. Mailing address: Stony Brook Camera Club, P.O. Box 20, Wrentham, MA 02093-0020

DUES: Individuals: \$50.00, Families: \$75.00, and \$25.00 for students and members over 65 years of age. To be eligible for competitions, dues must be paid before the first competition.

NEWSLETTER: Published three times during the year for Aug./Nov. Dec/ March, April/Jul; solely for the information, guidance and enjoyment of the Stony Brook Camera Club, Wrentham, MA.

WEBSITE: Visit our website at www.stonybrookcc.com for the latest schedule, updates, and breaking news, and photographs from our competitions, members, and activities throughout the year.

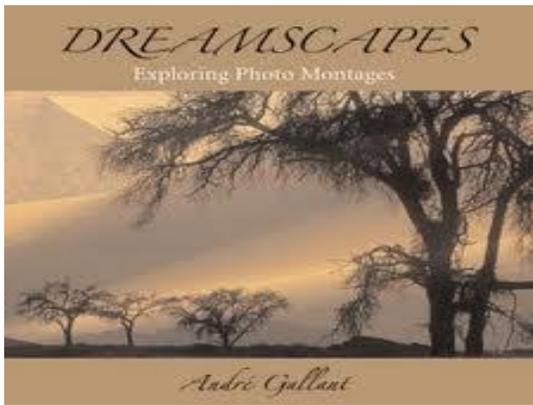
OFFICERS: Elected annually and serve as the executive committee with two past presidents. SBCC is affiliated with the N. E. Camera Club Council and is a member of the Photographic Society of America

STONY BROOK CAMERA CLUB : To promote enjoyment and proficiency in all aspects of photography through education, fellowship, exchange of knowledge and experience; and a broad appreciation of nature and our environment.

Words of Wisdom from Image Study
Jan 19th with Jim West and Ray Guillette



- When you are looking at your image consider the orientation and whether it might be improved by cropping, flipping it vertically or horizontally, or maybe changing it to a B&W.
- Use panels to increase the sense of depth.
- Remember that your eyes are drawn to out of focus color rather than in focus color.
- Cool colors recede while warm colors advance to the viewer, what Ray referred to as the visual depth of field.
- Consider cropping out an area of sky (only if this is just a small proportion of your image). The sky is an area of greatest contrast; therefore your eyes are drawn to it and away from the other elements of the image.
- Shoot both vertical and horizontal versions of an image.
- Scout out the location and move to different vantage points.
- Check for the direction of the light. Side lighting is best.
- If including people, try to keep them at camera level and avoid shooting down (or up) on them.
- Use a polarizer on cloudy days when shooting water
- Look for patterns
- Add clouds to cloudless skies in post processing.
- Set an image on a black background to provide less distraction and enhance shape.
- When taking sunset shots use HDR to capture the full dynamic range and get more detail out of the shadow areas.
- To avoid lens flare use a lens hood and try blocking the flare by extending your arm out with a hat or something else to block the flare.
- To help get increased DOF in landscape shots, use the hyperfocal distance scale on the lens (if it has one), not the viewfinder, to set the focus. The focusing ring on the lens should be set to 1 f-stop open from the shooting aperture. So this means if the shooting aperture is f/22 your lens should be set at f/16.



Expressive Photography by Andre Gallant **March 1st**

In this inspirational presentation by Andre Gallant, he shared his techniques for making what he calls “dreamscapes and montages”. No longer do you have to prevent camera shake or get that tack sharp image to turn it into an image that will get oohs and aaaahs, although they probably won’t score well in competition. He even encouraged us to add motion by doing the wiggle and jiggle with the camera to get astounding results. Although he had cautioned the audience about the addictive nature of his techniques, few took it to heart. Members were so impressed with his simple techniques that within hours, impressive images were popping up all over our Facebook page.

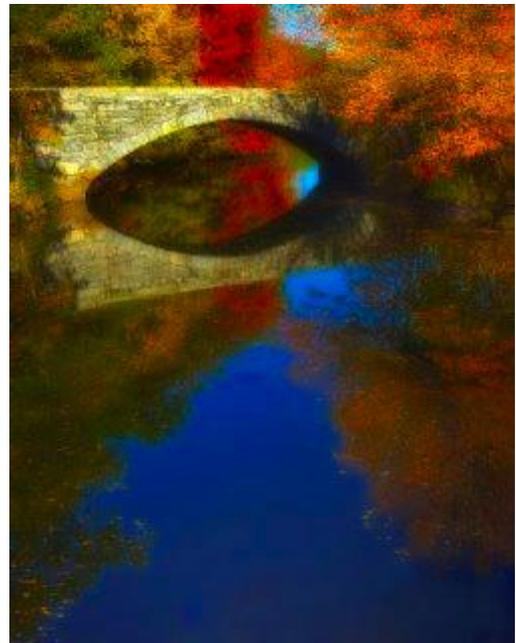


Composite Montage by Rob DeRobertis

Andre described his multiple techniques, with examples and a how to demonstration. He said that they can easily be done in PS or PS Elements. The first method he demonstrated was a composite montage, where he combines two images, one of a texture and the other of your choosing. He frequently makes his own textures using items in his home, like a cookie pan, and scanning them

into PS. He brings both images into PS in the same document in two different layers and then uses the blend mode setting, multiply, to combine them. You can fine tune your composite by adjusting the brightness, color, and/or opacity and using the move tool on the texture layer to get the effect you like before you flatten the layers into one image.

He then moved on to describe the making of surreal images or dreamscapes. For this technique he takes an image, duplicates it (layer>duplicate layer), and makes the duplicate copy brighter (image>Adjustments>Brightness/contrast), before applying a gaussian blur (filter>blur>Gaussian blur) starting at 20 px. Next he combines both images using the blend mode, multiply, for his final result



Dreamscape by Chuck Call

Andre has adapted the above method to create what he calls moonlight dreamscapes, since they appear as if they were photographed under moonlight. They are made by starting with a colored image, duplicating it and making it a black and white (Image>adjustments>black and white). He then applies the solarize setting (filter>stylize >solarize). The brightness can then be adjusted (image>Adjustments>Levels) or use an adjustment layer. Next he uses the original colored image and applies a Gaussian blur to it. The last step is to combine both images using the blend mode multiply.

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Another technique he uses to create “impressionistic photographs” is shooting multiple exposures using the appropriate setting on the camera to allow it to quickly take up to 10 shots of the same image (not all cameras have this ability). A fast shutter speed produces better results. He wants to get some movement as he takes the series and sometimes even moves the camera up to 2 inches while shooting. Later he stacks the images in PS, which if done correctly, should create a painterly effect.

A mirror montage was the last technique he discussed. For this one he again made a copy of his original image (layer>duplicate layer). The copy was rotated horizontally (edit>transform>flip horizontal). The blend mode, multiply, was applied to combine the images. This can make some interesting “creatures” appear in the center of the combined image, which you can alter by dragging the layer from side to side.



Mirror Montage by David Marshak

For those who don't have the software to do these techniques, he offered some shooting options that will get some special effects. We now don't need to use proper camera hand holding, don't need to get that tack sharp image, and don't need a tripod. This is for everyone! Andre showed us how to take pictures with a wiggle, squiggle, and pan. We all are familiar with panning to stop the action while something is crossing horizontally in front of us like a car or someone running but he promotes

creating movement rather than freezing it. He suggested panning fixed objects from bottom to top using slow shutter speeds like 1/8 sec. Then he added the wiggle to this panning motion, moving his camera from side to side, making a small letter “s” repeatedly.



Panning from bottom to top by Jake Jacobson

For objects that are circular like flowers, Andre demonstrated the squiggle motion where you make the Nike symbol repeatedly. Remember to make these movements, the wiggle and squiggle, very, very small. Just like with panning, practice, practice, practice!

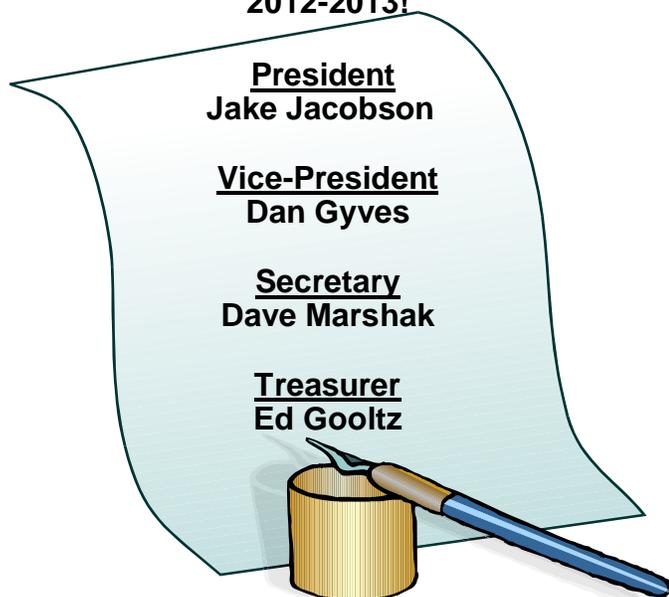
For more information, examples of these techniques, and his books, visit [Andre's website](#).

Garden Photography in New England

There are lots of opportunities to photograph local gardens, flowers and plant collections especially during the summer months. Check out [I Love Gardens.com](#) which lists public and private gardens by state. Here is a list of some more notable spots-

- [Arnold Arboretum](#)
- [Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens](#)
- [Berkshire Botanical Garden](#)
- [Blithewold Mansion](#)
- [Buttonwood Farms-Sunflowers \(July\)](#)
- [Green Animals Topiary Garden](#)
- [Lupine Festival-Franconia Notch NH \(June\)](#)
- [Roger Williams Park Botanical Center](#)
- [Sedgwick Gardens at Long Hill Reservation](#)
- [The Botanic Garden at Smith College](#)
- [Tower Hill Botanic Garden](#)
- [Wellesley College Botanic Gardens](#)
- [Wickford RI-Lotus Flowers](#)

Congratulations to our new officers for 2012-2013!



Digital Quad Competition 2011 – 2012

After over 300 entries, the winners who represented Stony Brook at the Quad on 5/3/2012 were

- At the Fair – Debra Boucher**
- Baby Animals – Debra Boucher
- Black & White – Rebecca Skinner
- Covered Bridge – Vivian Teague
- Five (things) – Debra Boucher
- Foot or Feet – Ted Mertz
- In the Mud – Lou Fraga
- Jagged – Jake Jacobson
- Low Key – Jake Jacobson**
- Luna/Moon – Charles Call**
- Macro – Tony Mistretta
- Old things (not people) – Brenda Cleveland
- Panning – Bud Morton
- Photo Journalism – Jake Jacobson
- Red – Rebecca Skinner
- Reflections – Debra Boucher
- Snow – Vivian Teague
- Splash – Stan Bergeron**
- Square – Henny Smith**
- Surprise – Ann McEvoy
- Tools of Trade – Robert Lehanka
- Window Display – Joe Kennedy**
- Wheels – Brenda Cleveland
- Wild things – Ted Mertz**

****placed first overall**

Congratulations to the winners!!

Tricks of the Trade from the Layers SIG

The Layers SIG met for several months using Matt Kloskowski's book, *The Complete Guide to Photoshop's Most Powerful Feature, Layers (2nd Edition)* as our guide. We all became much more adept at using layers and picked up some useful techniques to share with all of you. I have chosen three Photoshop techniques that we discussed and which we all felt were very useful.

Joe Kennedy showed us how to get some punch in our photos by using the luminosity blend mode. Open an image in PS and then convert a copy to B&W using any program of your choice. Bring the B&W copy back into PS as a new layer above the original background layer. Apply the luminosity blend mode to the B&W layer (change it from normal to luminosity). This will convert your B&W layer to color with a drastic improvement.

The next technique was replacing a sky that is either dull or cloudless with another more interesting sky. You need to have a picture of a nice sky with the light coming from the same angle as in the photo you want to add it to. To start, click on the photo with the nice sky. Then, choose Select>All to select the entire image. Now, choose Edit>Copy to copy the photo. Switch over to the photo that you want to replace the sky in. Use the Quick Selection tool (W) to make a rough selection of the sky. Then, go to Edit>Paste Special>Paste Into. This pastes the photo of the nice sky into your other photo, and automatically creates a mask based on the selection you just made. So, now you'll only see the good sky photo at the top. (You can tweak your selection by going to the mask panel and pressing the mask edge button.) Lastly, choose Edit>Free Transform and resize or move the sky, so it fits nicely into your photo.

The third technique employs the [High Pass filter for sharpening](#). You can learn more about this [here](#) and if you want an in-depth understanding of other sharpening techniques try [John Paul Caponigro's](#) site.

The following are additional resources used by members of the Layers Sig: David Nightingale's site, [Chromasia](#), where he has a free tutorial on Tonal Range and the Curves Tool as well as a subscription service that can be used to look at some of his techniques and mini PSDs that show his before and after work. He did a free three day online workshop in the fall on [Creative Live](#).
(continued on page 7)

Basic Camera Set-up Considerations for Taking Images to Process in HDR

1- Shoot in RAW

If you shoot in JPEG, some amount of dynamic range has already been sacrificed within each given image as the camera compresses the sensor data (usually 12 bits) down to 8 bits. Further, the camera applies a tone curve, compressing shadow tones in order to favor highlights. Shadow tones contribute a lot to HDR work. Finally, introducing JPEG compression artifacts (however slight) into the HDR process may degrade image quality.

2- Set the ISO to as low a setting as conditions will allow. Do not use auto ISO

Use the lowest possible ISO such as 100. This will minimize noise.

3- Set on Aperture Priority-choose the aperture and don't change between shots

The higher the aperture, the greater the depth of field.

4- Set the AEB function to exposure bracketing.

DSLR cameras usually have many different things you can auto-bracket: ISO, flash, Active D-Lighting (on Nikons) etc. Make sure you configure this function to bracket the exposure. When you shoot in A-mode, this means that your shutter speed is varied to change the exposure. Set bracket order under >MTR>over (darkest always first)

5- Set your AF mode to single or continuous or use manual focus. Don't use auto focus.

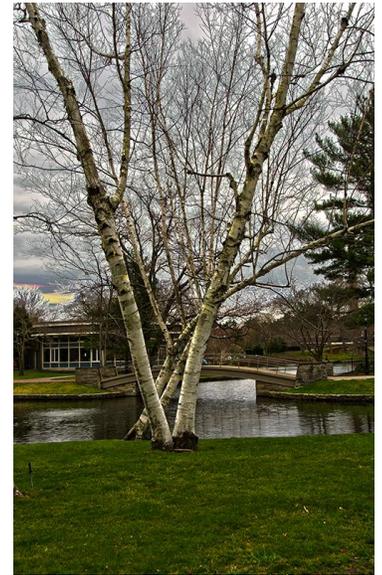
Many DSLRs have different AF modes (e.g. *auto*, *continuous* and *single* on Nikons). The default setting is normally *auto*. In *continuous* mode your camera tries to re-focus between shots if it thinks the scene has changed, even if you are shooting a series of multiple shots not lifting your finger from the shutter release button. In *single* mode, your camera focuses once (when you press the button half-way down) and then keeps this focus until you lift your finger. *Auto* mode lets the camera decide what to do. *Continuous* mode is not good as we want to keep the same focus throughout our AEB series. Especially in a dark environment, your camera will often decide to refocus in the middle of an AEB series, ruining the series. But with some camera models, continuous mode is required to

produce all three AEB exposures with one click of the shutter release button.

If you are manually bracketing any portion of the exposure sequence, use manual focus. Use manual focus with AF on continuous (may affect sharpness) or set AF mode to single. To ensure a consistent focus point in your set of pictures, you need to focus using the auto mode on your camera or focus manually. Then, switch to manual focus without changing the focus. This technique will ensure that all your pictures have the same focus point.

If your camera has an AF/AE-Lock button, configure it to lock the focus and the exposure.

You can configure it in different ways. Locking both focus and exposure is most convenient for our purposes. When you are shooting, you can point your camera somewhere, focus, press and hold the AE/AF-lock button and your camera will not change the focus or the exposure until you lift your finger off this button.



HDR by Joe Kennedy

6- Set up your camera to use the highest (fastest) possible shooting frequency (FPS).

Set to continuous shooting. You want to shoot as fast as possible.

7- Determine metering mode-Matrix or Evaluative vs Spot

Your metering mode is simply how your camera samples light to determine the proper exposure for the image.

8- Set a specific white balance or custom WB-Don't use auto white balance.

Ensure white balance stays the same across the images

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9- Use a tripod-Disable image stabilization

Allows for the sharpest image capture but you can handhold. Remember the rule of thumb that says that for a focal length of Xmm, you need a shutter speed of 1/Xs to get sharp images.

10- Use a timer or remote, exposure delay and/or mirror lockup-

If you find yourself having to actually use the shutter release button on your camera, then set it to a delayed exposure so that the shutter will release after either 2 or 10 seconds (or whatever your camera's timer is set to). If you are exposing in a dark area or using slow shutter speeds, you can go the extra step and activate your camera's Mirror Lock-up to even further reduce the chance of movement/vibration.



Photorealistic HDR by Peter Tetreault

11- Use the right lens-wide angle best

12- Do not shoot with a filter or polarizing filter

13- Do not use flash

How many shots to take?

You want enough shots to cover the full dynamic range. You are looking for detail in shadow and highlight areas. Use RGB histograms and know how to read a histogram. Your first shot should have no shadow clipping and lots of blown out highlights. The last shot should have lots of shadow clipping but no highlight clipping. Some suggestions: It is better to capture detail by overexposing. The histogram should show no blacks with the highlights clipped. So take an extra overexposed shot, this will also decrease noise. Shoot for the basement to decrease the halo effect. Take a shot at the lowest exposure, that is very underexposed with very little detail.

How do you know how many exposures to shoot?

The easiest way to evaluate the dynamic range of a scene is to use a spot meter* to measure the EV of the brightest and darkest areas, and calculate your exposure sequence accordingly. For example, if a given scene's highlights meter at 1/2000s at your chosen aperture and the shadows meter at 1/4s, then ten exposures taken at an interval of 1 EV would cover the range. You could possibly eliminate one or two of the exposures on the far ends of the range if you shoot RAW and can depend on your camera for good shadow and highlight detail capture. Five exposures shot 2 stops apart also would do the job, at the risk of providing a less smooth result. (*If you don't have a spot meter you can use your histogram to evaluate different areas of the scene. 30, 15, 8, 4, 2, 1, 1/2, **1/4**, 1/8, 1/15, 1/30, 1/60, 1/125, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1000, **1/2000** etc)

How to get more exposures if your camera only allows 3?

With only a little effort, you can extend the automatic bracketed approach to cover five shots at a 2 EV interval, even if your camera is limited to a three shot burst using auto-bracketing. Enable auto-bracketing at +/- 2 EV and select a good central exposure based on the camera's meter. Prior to shooting, dial in -2 EV exposure compensation and shoot three frames. Now quickly dial up to +2 EV compensation and shoot three more frames. At this point you have six frames, two of which are exposed the same; discard one of them later. This leaves you with five frames covering -4 to +4 EV, roughly 16.5 stops, which approaches DR of 100,000:1. If your camera supports exposure compensation of +/- 3 EV, you can use the same technique without having to throw away one of the exposures. You end up with six frames covering -5 to +5 EV, or about 18.5 stops of DR.

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Check them out for their free live online courses that cover all aspects of photography. Finally, we also looked at Evan Shaboneau's book, [Trick Photography and Special Effects](#). His [website](#) has many [tutorials](#) and a free ebook, [The Top Five Creative Photography Techniques](#).

Club Calendar

May 10, 2012	Competition, Class A&B Digital Nature, Slide Nature, Black & White Prints
May 17, 2012	New Member Showcase-Hunt's in Attendance
May 24, 2012	Image of the Year
May 31, 2012	Travel Photography of the Southwest with Jake Jacobson
June 7, 2012	Digital Circuit (Nature) after Business Meeting
June 14, 2012	End of Year Banquet and Member Show



[NECCC](http://neccc.org)



[PSA](http://psa.org)



STONY BROOK CAMERA CLUB "REFLECTIONS"

A PSA Award-Winning Newsletter

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