

# Trinity Arts Photo Club



www.trinityartsphotoclub.org



A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 18 Winter 2010

## What do those numbers mean?

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## New Year Resolutions

for Photography that is

by Mark Lenz

I recently read a blog article from Marc Silber about setting goals for photography. I thought about this for awhile and said to myself that this makes sense for those that make their living from photography. All of us that make a living doing other things set goals to focus us on important areas of the business and personal improvement at the beginning of the year. Those that are retired may do so as well, but I am not there yet.

But what about those of us that have photography as a hobby? Is setting photography goals appropriate as well?

Will it help us become better photographers? What should the goals be?

I think if we are serious about improving, setting goals will result in better focus on what you need to improve. Whether that is obtaining better equipment (those improving job performance goals may come in handy here), learning new techniques, traveling to a new place specifically for photography (we know one of our members that takes this one to the limit each year) or trying another software package, you are more likely to make it happen if you write it down as a goal.

Marc Silber writes "Let me ask you, when was the last time you thought about your goals as a photographer? Lots of us keep going out and shooting the same pictures over and over—you know the ones I'm talking about. Nice image the first few times you got it, but after a few hundred,

even you're tired of seeing it! How does that happen? You get good at a certain type of photography and keep on going out and finding that image again. An assignment I give students at my workshops is to "go out and get images that you normally wouldn't—get out of your comfort zone."

All of us probably can circle at least one of the things I listed above and make a written goal associated with it. Even if that new camera or big trip is not in the cards due to the current financial times, there are local or on line courses that can be taken and places we have not been in the DFW and surrounding area that can expand our photography world.

Part of the reason we probably joined the club was to make improvements to our photography. Hopefully we can work together to make 2010 a better year for photography for all of us. (continued on next page)



Here are links to a couple of sites that talk about photography goals.

<http://digital-photography-school.com/30-photographic-goals-for-2010>

[http://www.silberstudios.tv/blog/2009/12/20/why-set-your-photography-goals-or-are-you-waiting-for-them-to-knock-on-your-door-2/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+SilberStudios+%28Silber+Studios%29](http://www.silberstudios.tv/blog/2009/12/20/why-set-your-photography-goals-or-are-you-waiting-for-them-to-knock-on-your-door-2/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+SilberStudios+%28Silber+Studios%29)

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## What do Those Numbers Mean?

by Bill Webb

I was recently asked the following questions and thought the answers might also be useful to some other members. Here are the questions.

1. When it comes to lenses, what do the "f" numbers on the lens represent? (Example: f/3.5 - 5.6)
2. Would that be the sharpest zone of f/stop for that particular lens?

As to question 1, lenses with two numbers like that are zoom lenses and the numbers represent the widest aperture (largest lens opening) at the extreme ends of the zoom range for that lens.

Let's use a Nikon 18-200 mm zoom as our example. It goes from wide-angle (18 mm) to telephoto (200 mm) and has two f/numbers of 3.5 and 5.6 just as in question 1.

The first number is the largest aperture (= largest lens opening = smallest "f" number) that you can set with the lens at the wide angle (18 mm) end of the zoom range. In this case, with the lens zoomed out to 18 mm the smallest aperture I could set would be f/3.5. That's not bad but it's not great, either. Keep reading to help understand that.

The second number is the widest aperture at the telephoto (200 mm) end of the range. With our example lens, when I zoom it in to 200 mm for a shot of that bird on a tree limb, the largest (fastest) aperture I can get is f/5.6. With the aperture as small as this (remember that the larger the f/number the LESS light the lens gathers) I will need to use a slower shutter speed to get the right exposure but that means that any movement of the camera/lens will more likely blur the image because the shutter speed is too slow. Now, in broad open daylight f/5.6 probably won't be a problem and you'll need something more like f/11 anyway but when the light begins to dim just a little bit that aperture becomes ever more important. Vibration Reduction (VR or IS or something similar) really helps but still the rule applies - the smaller these numbers on the lens the better.

Understanding these numbers is important because they indicate how "fast" the lens is, that is, how much light it can gather at its widest opening. A lens at f/2.8 can gather TWICE as much light as one at f/4 and FOUR TIMES as much as at f/5.6, EIGHT TIMES as much as at f/8 and so on. These numbers are separated by 1 ev (exposure value) but that's the topic of another essay.

Now for question 2: The "sharpest" aperture is usually around f/8 or f/11 for most lenses. Either side of that the sharpness may fall off but it will likely not be noticeable until you get to the extreme ends of the ranges (f/2.8 < > f/22) or try to do big prints (8x10 or larger).

By the way, "prime" lenses (non zooms) or expensive zoom lenses will have only one "f" number shown. Again, the smaller that number, the better.

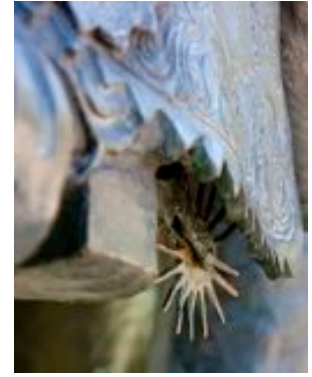
Technically, the "f" number is the ratio of focal length of the lens divided by the largest lens opening. Example: a 200 mm telephoto lens with a 70 mm widest aperture would be an f/2.8 lens because the ratio  $200/70 = 2.8$ .

Next time I'll write about "exposure value (ev)" and the various things we can set/tweak on our cameras related to ev.

## The "God Eye" Pole

by Larry Marx

My old boss in the crime scene department, Cpl. W. Carver, was a bit of a curmudgeon, but he was excellent in regard to paying attention to detail, as well as finding ways to get what he needed for documenting a crime scene. He discovered after going to many calls in small apartments that he couldn't get into his overall scene photos all the pieces of evidence which he could see while walking around unless he took a lot of photos. This was a problem, because he needed to have a photo that showed the relative positions of evidence and their distances from each other, despite three-



dimensional things being in the way such as couches, coffee tables, end tables, etc. Carver knew what he needed was the ability to see things from overhead, right up against the ceiling, as if he were a god looking down upon the mortals below.

Born in his fertile imagination was the god's eye pole. It came to him one day while he was changing a can light bulb in his living room ceiling using an expandable pole that it would be an excellent tool if he could get a camera on the pole and take photos from way up there. By happy circumstance, he discovered that when he took apart an old tripod so that just the top portion which screws into the camera was there, it fit nicely into the top of the expandable pole! I decided to follow his lead and make a pole for my personal use. I did end up using a hacksaw to cut off the top of the expandable pole, as well as to separate the tripod into parts, making sure there was a stub under the camera mounting platform to put into the top of the pole. I made sure it wasn't going to go anywhere with liberal use of super glue, then after it dried, voila!



The best way to make good use of the pole is just like everything else – practice, practice, practice. I found that I needed to pre-focus on something about the same distance away as what I planned to photograph, then use the 30 second timer to give me time to hoist the pole in place and steady it a bit. After each shot, bring the camera down and have a look at your handiwork. If it doesn't look quite right, lather, rinse, repeat, until you have a cool, unusual picture that most people, even professional photographers, probably don't have in their repertoire. See photos for examples.

all the pixels in the sensor operating correctly. For camera buffs with budget issues, they could at least use the process to assist in correcting, one at a time, the fixed pixels in an important photograph.

## Value Your Work

*by Lynn Troy Maniscalco, FPSSA, EPSA, from PSA Journal January 2010*

As president of a 270-member club, I get lots of notices about photo contests but, before notifying our membership, I always review the conditions and, if the usage rights are unclear, inquire, "Before passing this on to our members I'd like to know what rights, if any, you would claim for the submitted photos."

If I get a reply at all, it usually goes something like this most recent one: "We've had a couple of comments about the image rights and wanted to clarify that entrants retain copyright to any personal photographs submitted to us. We ask that entrants offer their work under the Creative Commons



license, and specifically the 'Attribution License' on flickr. <http://flickr.com/creativecommons/>. As stated there, 'Attribution means: You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work—and derivative works based upon it—but only if they give you credit.' We follow these rules, crediting photographers and providing a link back to their flickr page for any images we use (or any successor or affiliated web site).” To that I replied, “Sorry, our members would not want to participate. What good is copyright if you let everyone copy, distribute, display, and perform the copyrighted work, and any derivative works based upon it? That is exactly what copyright is intended to protect, and a policy like that takes advantage of uninformed amateurs who mistakenly believe that a credit line will lead to professional success. We understand that our work has value, and our members expect payment for any use of their images beyond display, or an occasional donation to a worthy cause.”

Another was more direct, stating, “You retain copyright but must allow anyone to copy, distribute, display, and perform the copyrighted work, and any derivative works based upon it, for which you will get a photo credit.” I replied that retaining the copyright would be meaningless in this case, as the very basis of copyright is to give a creator total control over the use of his own work. Still another explicitly required “permission to use, modify, adapt, reproduce, publish, and distribute the photograph, or any portion thereof, in any printed form and by any kind of mechanical or electronic or any other method or device of reproduction, publication, and distribution without notification or payment.” Their lawyers apparently intended to cover every possible

option for their client, but again I explained that such a policy negates the actual intention of copyright, and why such terms are unacceptable, and that our members expect something more in return for use of their work. Probably needless to mention, I don't usually hear from these people again! But a few, after being bombarded with complaints from enough people, have actually withdrawn some of the most objectionable terms. Because so many amateur photographers will innocently sign away all their rights, such contests too often serve the purpose of providing free images to the sponsor for use in advertising, to be sold or licensed to others, or to be made available on a website for unlimited appropriation by others. These are uses for which a photographer should rightfully be compensated, so read the rules carefully and if you will be required to allow your entries to be used at the discretion of the sponsors with no compensation, that should be a deal breaker. And if the usage rights are not clear, ask questions before deciding whether or not to submit your work. When a regional bank first approached our club many years ago to solicit images for an annual state calendar, the project was proposed as a contest in which the winning entries would be published in return for photo credits. But, knowing how costly it would be for the bank to purchase comparable art from a stock house or to hire a professional photographer to produce it, we were able to negotiate fees for use of the selected images, which has resulted in a favorable outcome for everyone. While they gain access to an ever-changing selection of great local work, enabling them to complete their annual project under budget, our members are appropriately compensated for their contributions—a win-win situation!

Occasionally you may decide to contribute your photographic skills to some worthy cause that you want to support, or to gain special access to a particular event. No problem if you go into it knowing that, and if you are sure they cannot afford to pay anyone. However, even then it's a good idea to agree in advance how your work will be used and to retain the copyright.

But the next time you are tempted to submit your images to a contest, read the rules carefully and, if the usage rights are not clear, ask questions before deciding whether or not to participate. Be assured that your work has value, and understand that the very basis of copyright is to give creators absolute control of their work. Do not just give it away!

## Recent Programs

*by Mark Lenz*

Thanks to Greg Milano and Steve Horton for providing their time to the club during the fall. Greg, a local professional photographer who shoots mostly food talked about his line of work. We all learned the tricks of the trade when it comes to taking photos of food. It is quite a challenge to make it look appealing.

Steve made a presentation about Pro Show Gold slide presentation software using it to showcase photos from some of his excursions .



## Compositional Choices

by Deborah Sandidge provided on  
Betterphoto.com

Finding a great subject is essential in photography. How to compose for a great subject is the next challenge. Your first instincts about composition are good to follow; but also push yourself to additionally compose your subject in different ways. You might surprise yourself with what choice you like best.

Here are a few ideas... If your first inclination is to photograph in landscape orientation, let portrait orientation be your next choice. Try tilting your camera to the left or right to compose diagonally. This simple step often creates a more dynamic image. What happens if you use a LensBaby? Go for selective focus and softly blur all elements except your subject. Use a wide-angle lens for a composition that tells the whole story. Try isolating a section of your subject using a zoom lens. Compose for the rule of thirds, and then break the rules. Move around your subject, find light that is different, and photograph the shadows. Change your perspective by moving to your left, right, up or down. Photograph your subject in HDR, infrared, use multiple exposures, pan your subject, or consider a panorama.

These compositional choices and techniques will expand the creative opportunities you have in photographing a great subject.

Editor's Note: Deborah Sandidge teaches an awesome course here at BetterPhoto.com: Digital Infrared Photography

## To Blog or not to Blog, that is the Question.

by Mark Lenz

Something I have been thinking about while looking at other photo club sites is blogging. I have never had a blog. But this is 2010 and, well, it seems like if you do not have a blog, it is so 2000.

Some sites have done away with the monthly or quarterly newsletter in favor of an on line blog that is used by various club members to share stories about trips, techniques or software. Since I am responsible for the newsletter, that would seem to put me out of a job. But that would probably be a good thing. I am always late publishing the quarterly letter and I am always asking for other members to help me out with articles.

We could have a gatekeeper that ensures that the Blog is maintained in a professional manner and that it is updated with new materials regularly. I am open to any thoughts from the membership and will continue my toils on the newsletter if everyone deems it to be the best communication vehicle for the club.

## 2010 Officers

President -Cinda Benton  
Vice-President- Barbara Denman  
Treasurer- Denise Remfert  
Secretary-Mark Lenz

Officer at Large – Bill Webb

Officer at Large – Bruce Hutter

## Committees

Members are always welcome to join any committee they are interested in. Contact any of the officers above if you are interested. Committee opportunities (and current chair) include Programs (Open), Competition (Paul Oney), Field Trips (Open), Publicity (Open), Website (Bruce Hutter), Membership (Open), and Refreshments (Open).

You can see that this "Open guy / gal has lots to do, so if you think you can step in, Open would appreciate it very much.

## Website

On August 22nd, we had 31 users online on our forum. The most ever since we started the forum.

This stat came a couple days after our promotional efforts at the Taste of Northeast. See more about the Taste of North East in the previous article in this newsletter.

So, be sure to check out the TAPC forum on our web site to see what everyone is talking about!

[www.trinityartsphotoclub.org](http://www.trinityartsphotoclub.org)



August Competition Winners



### September Competition Winners





October Competition Winners

