The Viewfinder
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A Great Day in my life *Moshe Markewitz*

Camera clubs are not intended to deal with member's personal matters, yet there is a component of story telling in photography and I want to tell you a great story without using my camera. I had received a call from my Brother who informed me that on a routine check up, he was found to have the worst type of Leukemia with only several months to live.

I flew to Israel to be with him. When the possibility of a cure through a Bone Marrow Transplant was mentioned, I did not hesitate and offered myself as a stem cell donor like anyone of you would have done. I stayed in Israel for the first time 28 days, but his condition after chemotherapy was not good enough for a transplant. Meanwhile, the hospital checked my blood and we were found to be a 100% tissue match. Only siblings can be considered as transplant donors and only 25 % of siblings are a match. It was agreed with the treating professor (every one in Israel is a professor), to return to the U.S. and be available to return on a moments notice. I was home less than 12 days when the call came.

When I arrived back in Israel, I received four daily injections of Neupogen, a granulocyte colony-stimulating factor, to stimulate my bone marrow for cell production. These injections have flu-like side effect with outbreaks of fever, but it was tolerable. On the fifth day I was connected to an apheresis machine to have my stem cells harvested. During this procedure, a large needle is inserted into each forearm. One needle is used to withdraw blood and the other to return the blood without the stem cells. The procedure takes about 5 ½ hours while you sit in a recliner. Stem Cells can only survive at room temperature for 72 hours, but they can last for 10 years in a frozen state. During this time the patient is given a second course of chemotherapy to destroy the dysfunctional bone marrow. After a day of rest he is given the donor's cells. The amazing thing about this procedure is the fact that the recipient will carry the blood group of the donor for the rest of his life and will lose his own genetic blood group identification. (My blood group is 0 and my brother's was B+, after the transplant he will be a group 0 individual). I donated Stem Cells on October 22nd, and 23rd, and my brother received the transplant on November 2nd.2006

I wanted to share this experience with you, being among the most gratifying feelings one can have in life.

PROGRAM 2006-07	
November	
16	"Florida" Presented by John Brokos
30	"Photoshop Layers - Why photographers should learn how to use them. Presented by Alan Agdern
December	
14	Competition- Dave Gardner
21	"Black and White Techniques" Presented by Art Inselsberger
28	Theme Competition- "Main Street Northport"
January 2007	
11	Competition- Bill Rudock
18	"Bird Photography" by Dave Gardner
25	Presentation by Ramesh Patwa
February	
8	Competition- Dick Hunt
15	"Zoo Photography" presented by Sheldon Pollack
22	"Photoshop" presented by Bill Schmidt
March	
8	Competition- Barry Kurek
15	"Orchids" presented by Bill Overtoon
22	Critique
April	
12	Competition- Leon Hertzson
19	Bob Simari or Ivan Rothman
26	Theme Competition- Manipulated images
May	
10	Competition- Andrew Kurchey
17	Bob Simari or Ivan Rothman
24	Endo of Year Competition- Sherman Paur and Art Donnelly
Don't forget Sunday mornings, 8 am at the Celebrity Diner	

New Software

Elements 5.0 Like other Adobe products, this is a program that just keeps getting better. If you have demurred from spending a small fortune on Photoshop CS2, you may be vindicated with the new Photoshop Elements 5.0. There are many improvements to this version including a color curves control, a healing brush tool and an organizer similar to Bridge. Black and white conversion is done with a tool similar to the Channel Mixer in Photoshop. There are also a number of "intelligent fixes" that automate correction of the most common problems. The only negative comments I could find while browsing the Internet for this article, was that some users claimed that it ran slower than 4.0 when saving.

Lightzone is another program that you may wish to look at by way of a free trial download. I tried the program and found it to be somewhat awkward, but will not pass judgment without more experience. I admit that I did not read the online manual, but I did not read the Elements manual either and was able to operate that program by intuition and Photoshop experience only. The same cannot be said for Lightzone, but I leave that to you.

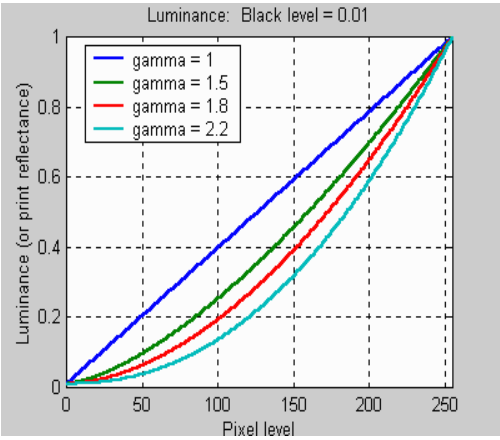
Picasa 2.5 The fact that this program from Google is free, is not the best thing about it. You can use it for all the basic editing tasks, including downloading from your camera or card. But that is not its strong suite. Where Picasa really stands out is in reviewing and organizing your photos. It automatically finds all your images. If they're on your computer, Picasa will find them and display them in a chronological structure. Booting up the program is a 4 second process on my ancient hp computer. If you have not downloaded it yet, you should.

Gamma: what is it anyway?

Aside from being the third letter of the Greek alphabet, "Gamma" is used extensively in photography, yet remains one of the least understood concepts. Simply stated, gamma is a measure of the contrast of photographic materials. Specifically, It is *the gradient of the straight-line portion of the characteristic curve of a material*. Don't despair- I will explain. The characteristic curve is the curve formed by plotting luminance (brightness) against density in the case of film, or pixel response in the case of a digital sensor.

Before digital photography, Gamma was typically manipulated in the darkroom through developer selection and by the use of paper grades or variable contrast filters.

While Gamma is still a valid measure for photographic materials it is seldom used for that purpose today. In digital photography, the concept of Gamma applies to the calibration of monitors and contrast adjustment, especially in the mid-tones, when manipulating curves in Photoshop and other programs. The higher the Gamma is, the higher the contrast of the image will be. Referring to the graph on the left, you can see that the steeper the slop of the central portion of the line, the higher the gamma.



When calibrating a monitor, you typically aim for a gamma of 2.2 for Windows or 1.8 for McIntosh computers. At those gamma settings, images will appear normal to human vision. In fact, SRGB and Adobe RGB color spaces are based on a gamma of 2.2. The reason for the difference between Macs and Windows based PCs is that McIntosh computers partially correct the Gamma in their hardware.

Digital sensors are linear in response, which means that the voltage they generate is proportional to the light reaching them. Human vision is not linear however. The output of a digital sensor must be converted to a non-linear relationship to be realistically viewed. The software built into digital cameras does a very good job of this, that's why we don't have to calibrate a camera. Computer monitors do need correction however, and in many cases, the preset Gamma correction of 2.2 for Windows systems and 1.8 for Macs is close to adequate (but no cigar). That's where monitor calibration comes in. The best way to do this is with a third party system such as demonstrated by Gerry at the Oct. 26 meeting. Alternatively you can get a very good approximation with the "Adobe Gamma" application that is included with Photoshop, and it's free. If you have any version of Photoshop produced in the last 10 or so years, you will find the Adobe Gamma application in your Windows Control Panel.

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Competition Scores November 9, 2006			
	Avg.		
B&W PRINTS - A	=		*8.18*
Agdern, Alan	*8*	*7*	*7*
Bellow, Marc	*9*	*9*	
Glick, Robert	*9*	*8*	*9*
Harrison, Gerald	*9*	*8*	*8*
Markewitz, Moshe	*8*		
Newman, Peter	*8*	*8*	*8*
Ross, Alan	*7*		
Schmidt, Bill	*7*	*8*	*8*
Silverstein, Marty	*9*	*9*	***9***
	Avg.		
B&W PRINTS- B	=		*7.67*
Bowie, Bill	*8*	***9***	
Herbst, Al	*8*		
Metzger, Peter	*8*		
Sax, Jerome	*7*		
Starling, Edward	*7*		
Weisler, Jules	*7*	*8*	*7*
	Avg.		
COLOR PRINTS- A	=		*8.22*
Agdern, Alan	*8*	*8*	*7*
Bellow, Marc	*9*	*8*	*9*
Bowie, Bill	*8*	*8*	
Glick, Robert	***9***	*9*	*8*
Greenberg, Carole	*8*	*7*	
Harrison, Gerald	*8*	*8*	*9*
Kleinmann, Clem	*8*	*9*	*8*
Markewitz, Moshe	*7*	*8*	*9*
Metzger, Peter	*8*	*8*	
Newman, Peter	*9*	*8*	*8*
Patwa, Ramesh	*8*	*8*	*9*
Ross, Alan	*8*	*8*	
Schmidt, Bill	*8*	*8*	*8*
Silverstein, Marty	*9*	*9*	*9*
Starling, Edward	*8*	*8*	*8*
	Avg.		
COLOR PRINTS- B	=		*7.38*
Harrison, Aileen	*7*		
Herbst, Al	*8*	*7*	*8*
Kleinmann, Sarah	*7*	***9***	*7*
Marcus, Roslyn	*8*	*7*	*7*
Monahan, Maylan	*8*	*8*	*7*
Nussbaum, Richard	*8*		
Rothman, Stan	*7*	*8*	*8*
Sax, Jerome	*6*	*7*	*7*
Sunshine, Ira	*7*		
Weisler, Jules	*7*	*7*	*7*

The relationship between brightness and the signal received by a pixel on your monitor is:

Output luminance = (pixel level) ^{gamma}

When your monitor is calibrated to 2.2 for example and a pixel on the monitor receives a signal from your PC, the brightness will be $x^{2.2}$, where x is a decimal value from 0 to 1 representing luminance and 2.2 is the Gamma. For example, a value of 0.5 will be displayed with a brightness of 0.218 (21.8% of maximum). This is the brightness that will be an accurate translation for your eyes.

For Sale

Bronica system. Bronica SQ-A $2^1/_4$ x $2^1/_4$ (6 cm x 6 cm) SLR complete with 220 roll-film back, waist-level finder, Bronica ME Prism Finder, body caps, dark slide, Zenza Bronica PS 80 mm f2.8 lens with Seiko electronic shutter 8 sec. to $^1/_{5\,00}$ sec., electronic flash sync at all speeds, Leather lens case, Vivitar 285HV Thyristor flash with sync cord, camera bag, Original boxes and manuals. Original purchase price over $2,300. Absolute mint condition. Price: $500 complete. Call Barry at 433-5527 or write to: barry.goldstein@yahoo.com

Winter Doldrums?

When the weather is less than inviting for outdoor photography, why not try your hand at an indoor still life or some creative tabletop photography?

A window with a few reflectors can be an attractive light source, but not always a practical one. You could use off camera flash(s). Your camera manual probably has a lot of information. Speaking of reflectors, there is no need to buy anything fancy. A piece of ordinary cardboard covered with aluminum foil makes a good reflector. For a softer, less specular light, you can use an ordinary piece of white matboard.

Incandescent lights are a practical alternative. You can invest in light stands, but that' s not necessary. If you are setting up in a basement, you can clamp your lights to exposed beams, pipes or chair backs, using clamp type reflectors available from hardware stores at much lower prices than available from camera stores. Pay particular attention to the strength of the clamp and the way it is attached to the light socket. I have found that the ones sold by Home Depot are sturdier and do not have the troublesome ball joint that is hard to adjust. Look for one

that has a very tight clamp and a swivel joint rather than a ball joint.

With the ability of a digital camera to adjust for the color temperature of your lights, it is not necessary to use 'photoflood bulbs'. If you do use photofloods (assuming you can find them), be aware that they get extremely hot and can be a fire hazard, so keep them away from paper, fabric or anything else that is flammable. You can use a custom white balance setting according to your camera's instructions or just try the auto white balance setting. It usually works fine.

When photographing inanimate objects, exposure time is not much of an issue, so you don't need a particularly intense light sources. Just use a tripod and set your camera for aperture priority. That will allow you to use a small aperture to control depth of field and let the shutter speed fall where it may. Remember that the closer you get to the subject, the smaller the depth of field for any given focal length. A cable or remote control will eliminate the camera shake that would otherwise be troublesome with relatively long exposures. If you have neither a cable release nor remote, use the self-timer. When the shutter fires you will not be touching the camera, hence no blur.

The new energy saver bulbs like the spiral fluorescent one pictured here are extremely efficient light sources that produce a negligible amount of heat. They will not burn your fingers or your house nor will not wilt your subject. Be sure to comparison shop, because the prices vary widely. You can pay $6.00 for one in one store, or 3.95 for a package of 5 at another (I actually got that price at a recent sale, but it was the last one. Sorry).

If you would like a winter project, consider building a 'light bank' by installing multiple light sockets in a 5 sided enclosure made of plywood. Picture the inside of a drawer filled with light bulbs. The author is currently building one that will measure 24 x 24 x 6 inches deep. You can use any number of bulbs. A 14 watt spiral fluorescent bulb will give an amount of light equivalent to a 60 watt incandescent bulb. A 6 bulb unit will therefore give the equivalent of 360 watts of incandescent light. The finished unit can be mounted on a heavy stand or tall tripod or suspended from the ceiling via wires. You will need to install a flush mounted socket for each bulb. These sockets are available in hardware stores.

It should be noted that the color temperatures vary widely. The newer bulbs on the market are coated to produce a warmer temperature than the cold light emitted by the earlier models. It should also be noted that fluorescent light sources do not produce a continuous spectrum of light, but experience indicates that this is not a problem.

Call for Articles

We would like to publish member's articles. If you have a topic that interests you, it probably will interest others. Why not share it with the rest of us. It can be a page or a paragraph. Just send it to barry.goldstein@yahoo.com.

Don't forget Sunday morning at the Celebrity Diner