



## The Newsletter of the Syosset Camera Club

BARRY GOLDSTEIN, EDITOR

# the Viewfinder

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Contact Officers via the  
[www.syossetcc.org](http://www.syossetcc.org) link

## President's Message

A new season is starting and exciting photographic adventures await. First I would like to thank Linda Volin for her service as president these past two years and maintaining a vibrant and effective club. I would also like to thank Al Herbst, Valerie DeBiase, and Marty Silverstein for their efforts to improve our performance at PFLI. They have proved that we can move up in the ranking in PFLI without becoming a cutthroat club. The only area that we were lacking was in Black and White, particularly in the B group. This was because we were lacking enough entries in this area. I personally will attempt to provide three Black & White images for each competition and encourage all of you to do the same. Finally I would like to thank all of you who contributed to the success in the past and will continue do so in the future.

One area that I will work on with Jules Weisler is the schedule for our Sunday shoots. It has become a joke that if something is on the list for that Sunday, it means that we cannot go to that place. While it makes for a good joke, we should be able to put together a better process for Sundays. We need to be somewhere between a list copied for year to year and the work, that Alan Agdern did for each Sunday some years back. I ask everyone to think about a better

## Meeting Schedule

### September 2011

8	Competition – Judged by John Brokos
15	“Photoshop Layers for Photographers” - Why you should learn how to use them.
22	Critique and “Seascapes” by Ira Scheinerman

### October

13	Competition – Judged by Chuck Pine
20	“Birds of Prey” presented by Dave Gardner
27	Critique and “Special Exposure Conditions” presented by Marty Silverstein

### November

3	Competition – Judged by Laura Eppig
10	“Macro Photography” presented by Harvey Augenbraun
17	Critique and Presentation TBA

### December

8	Competition – Judged by TBA
15	“The Past 5 Years of my Vision” by Ken Bausert
22	Critique and Presentation TBA

### January 2012

12	Competition – Judged by Adolfo Briceno
19	Lecture by John Brokos
27	Critique and Presentation TBA

### February

9	Competition – Judged by Leon Herzon
16	Lecture <i>Open</i>
23	Critique and presentation

### March

8	Competition – Judged by Joe Senzatimoro
15	Lecture on Flash by Marty Silverstein
22	Critique and presentation TBA

### April

5	Tentative SCC Board Meeting
12	Theme Competition Seascape Judged by Dick Hunt
19	“digital Show” by Jan Altes
26	Critique and presentation

### May

10	Competition - Judged by
17	“Monitor Calibration” by Ben Vaccaro
24	End of Year Competition

### June

1 or 8	Awards Dinner - Tentative
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solution and, if you provide your suggestions to me, I will compile them and see if there is a better process we can adopt.

## **B&W** (one mans opinion)

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Black and White is monochrome but not monotone. Consider that a typical SLR captures light at 12 bits per pixel. Each pixel has a tonality ranging from black to white in one of 4,096 steps ( $2^{12}$ ), so the possibilities are awesome. Even at 8-bits the number of gray shades is 256, which surpasses the ability of human vision to differentiate.

Photography is all about light, composition and texture. When a subject can be portrayed without the use of color information, color can get in the way of the composition.

All art forms strive to reduce complexity in order to get as close as possible to the essence of the subject. In my experience, I have found that removing color and optimizing the gray scale tonal range of more often than not improves it. The exception is subjects in which the color is the point of interest. Even subjects known for their brilliant color, when portrayed in black and white can convey an entirely different aesthetic, in which form and texture becomes the subject. In the example shown here, the color of the flower is eye-catching but a case can be made for the slightly tinted B&W conversion. After all, there is no shortage of beautiful color photos of flowers.



Although color photography seems to have its roots in a process described by James Clerk Maxwell in 1835, it was not a practical process until the introduction of Kodachrome in 1935. Think of all the great photography before and after that date. How much of it was color?

Black and white photography is enjoying a new popularity due in no small part to the availability of software to produce excellent results. In recent years there has been a proliferation of programs specifically for B&W, but one has to look no further than the basic editing programs. Even free programs like Picasa, can do a decent job, but

specialized applications like Silver Efex can release the hidden potential of a digital file. It should be understood that these specialized programs do nothing that can't be done in Photoshop with some effort.

## Soft Focus

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Like color, the obsession over sharpness can be a misplaced value when it is not consistent with the aesthetics of the image. "Soft focus" is a technique for doing just what the name suggests. The diffusion disc, once a popular addition to the front of the lens is seldom used in modern times for reasons that elude me. It would be hard to find a vintage film in which the star was not shot with a soft focus lens or filter to considerable advantage.



The objective of 'soft focus' is to diffuse light in order to create a glamorous effect in portraiture or a 'dreamy' effect in landscapes etc.

Soft focus is not the same as out-of-focus. Technically, it is the effect of spherical aberration. Spherical aberration is the natural result of light rays being refracted differently near the edge of a lens than at the center. Optical engineers have always known that aspherical lenses could solve the problem, but until the advent of modern computers it took decades to design such a lens. In the 1940s and earlier, spherical aberration was a fact of life and some lenses were even optimized to exaggerate it for portraiture and landscape use. One example of such a lens in the 35 mm world is the Leitz Thambar f2.2 which was prized for its use in portraiture. There were many more for larger cameras.

Canon and Pentax each make a modern day soft focus lens in which the effect can be turned on or off. They are the *Canon EF 135mm f/2.8 with Soft-focus* and the *Pentax SMC 28mm f/2.8 FA Soft Lens*. There is also the overpriced but effective *Lens Baby Soft Focus Optic*.

Soft focus can be approximated by the use of a diffusion filter, shooting through a nylon stocking or smearing Vaseline on a clear filter.

You can simulate a soft focus effect in Photoshop by applying Gaussian blur. It's close, but no cigar as they say. There are a large number of Photoshop Actions that can be downloaded which can give you a more refined soft focus effect.



The soft focus effect is best when applied mostly to highlights, which is accomplished by a diffusion filter (disc). The filters pictured here were obtained in a garage sale. They are a set of 3 in progressive strengths made by Eastman in 1922 to fit their f/4.5 lens. Sadly, they are too small to fit

modern lens. Kodak no longer makes diffusion discs, but they are readily available from Tiffen, Hoya and others in standard sizes.

## SCC All Stars

We have six PFLI all stars in the club. That means that they have averaged 23 points in not less than five competitions.

### Color A

- Marty Silberstein
- Ed Starling
- Valerie DeBiase

### Color B

- Chris Ferrara
- Sunil Chhatpar

### Black & White A

- Marty Silverstein
- Alan Agdern

### Digital A

- Marty Silverstein

## SCC Photographer of Year Marty Silverstein

This has been a good year for Marty photographically speaking. There isn't much that Marty has not accomplished, such as:



- First Place Leonard victor Award for Color Group A
- Second Place Leonard victor black and white Group A

*The Leonard Victor Award is for high score in the End of Year Competition.*

- All-Stars First Place color print A group
  - All-Stars First Place in Black and White A
- To qualify as an All-Starr, you must have earned an average of 23 points or more during the season.*
- Hall of Fame 2010- Marty was the only recipient of the award in 2010

*The PFLI Hall of Fame honors those photographers who have shown exceptional photographic skill over an extended period of time. Selections are based on accumulating a minimum of 50 points as follows: For*

### FYI

*We have recently learned that John Flagg has suffered a heart attack. We are told that John is resting at home.*

## DUES REMINDER

Please remember to pay your dues prior to the September meeting.

Send your check (\$45 for individual or \$50 for a couple to:

*Barry Goldstein  
6 Saul Place  
Plainview, NY 11803*

The SCC remains one of the best values you can find. For about \$0.13 a day you get 27 programs a year that include stimulating discussions, educational lectures, fun competitions and weekly field trips. Perhaps one of the most valuable perks is an excuse to get out there and capture some good images. And, don't forget that you also get discounts at local camera stores.



Please use the application attached to this Viewfinder if there has been any change in your address, email or phone number. Otherwise just send a check.

finishing in the top For placing in the top 3 at a Leonard Victor Competition, 3 points. All must be obtained in a minimum of a 5 year period.

**2011 New England Camera Club Council Honors**

- Color prints Best In Show
- Black and White Prints Judges Choice
- Digital judge's choice.

**SCC Promotions for 2011-12**

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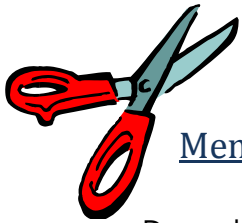
**Alan Agdern** from Color A to AA and from Black and White A to AA

**Chris Ferrara** from color B to A

**Peter Metzger** from Black and White B to A

**Fred Sterman** from Projection B to A

**Linda Volin** from Projection B to A (by election)



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Membership Renewal Form

Dues should be paid prior to the first meeting in September and must be paid no later than September 30. Members in default on September 30 are not eligible for the October competition. Persons not paying dues by October 31 will be dropped from the membership list.

Home Tel. No.: ..... Mobile Phone .....

Address: ..... City: ..... Zip:.....

E-Mail Address (for newsletters and announcements) \_\_\_\_\_

Regular Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ @\$45 \_\_\_\_

Additional Family Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ @\$5 \_\_\_\_

Student Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ @\$15 \_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed

**Please make your check payable to the Syosset Camera Club and send it to:**

→ Barry Goldstein 6 Saul Place , Plainview, N.Y. 11803