



The Lens and Eye

North Bethesda Camera Club

Volume 46 Number 7 <http://www.nbccmd.org> Editor: José Cartas nbccleandeye@yahoo.com March, 2011

Calendar

March, 2011

- 1 Community Outreach – PCR: 7:00 pm.
- 2 Competition Night: 7:30 pm.
Judge: Mary Ann Setton.
Hospitality: John Barnes, Allen Melser.
- 3 Education Committee: 7:15 pm.
Composition.
- 8 Education Committee: 7:00 pm.
Matting and Framing.
- 10 Education Committee: 7:15 pm.
Beyond the Rules.
- 16 Board Meeting: 7:30 pm. Hanson's.
- 17 Education Committee: 7:00 pm.
Matting and Framing.
- 19 Field Trip: Harper's Ferry to Point of
Rocks, MD.
- 20 Photo Essay: 3:00 pm. Asbury
Methodist Village.
- 22 Education Committee: 1:00 pm.
Matting and Framing.
- 23 Program Night: 7:30 pm.
Robert Creamer. Scanner Photography.
Hospitality: TBA.
- 30 Program Night: 7:30 pm.
Bert Shankman. Macro Photography.
Hospitality: Stuart Glickman, Anita van
Rooy.
- TBA Education Committee.
Early Morning Shoot in D.C.

April, 2011

- 2 Field Trip: Richmond Gardens, VA.
- 5 Community Outreach – PCR: 7:00 pm.
- 6 Competition Night – Electronic: 7:30 pm.
- 7 Education Committee: 7:15 pm.
Camera RAW or JPG.
- 13 Program Night/Print Competition: 7:30 pm.
- 14 Education Committee: 7:30 pm.
Photo Critique Group.
- 20 Board Meeting: 7:30 pm. Lee's.
- 27 Workshop: 7:30 pm.

Program Night, March 23 Robert Creamer Scanner Photography

Nikhil Bahl

Photography has been very good to Robert Creamer. Photography most of all has given him the opportunity to explore, be curious, and allowed him an avenue to interpret the world around him as an artist, a teacher, and as a professional architectural photographer.

His new work, which is on tour as a Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition, concentrates on a blend of interests in technology and the aging process. These images were captured using a scanner as a camera. The work began as "look what technology can reveal" to his present command over technique to have it work for him and reflect his intentions. Digital technology is a vital and integral part of this process but is not what interests him most. The scanner is a tool that enhances his ability to observe. These images are about time, trans-

Cont'd on p.4



Competition Assignment

Bottle(s)

The dominant subject must be one or more bottles, recognizable either in whole or in part. The contents of the bottle or its label must not be dominant. (Must have been taken on or after June 1, 2009.)

Program Night, March 30 Bert Shankman Macro Photography

John Burgess

Our program presenter for March 30 is Bert GF Shankman. Bert, a popular area photographer, has presented to the NBCC twice before. His current work, however, represents an immersion of his life in art as expressed through floral images.

Bert grew up on a farm where he gained a lifelong appreciation of nature and a passion for flowers. He graduated from Case Western Reserve University with an A.B. in Art History and Economics and pursued further study in Studio Art at the Corcoran School of Art and Design. He was employed by the Federal Reserve Board until his retirement in 1995.

Presently, he maintains a garden where he grows all the flowers he photographs. He is able to record all

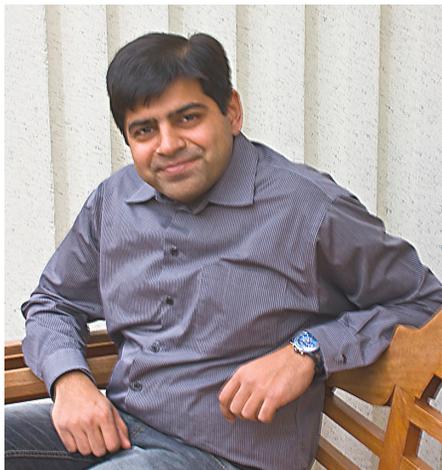
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Sunday, March 20
Photo Essay
at
Asbury Methodist
Village

See details on page 11

Member Profile

Jitesh Batra



There were several times in Jitesh' life when he might actually have "made it" as a wedding photographer. He modestly admits to being very good at organizing group shots and at recording all the best moments of a wedding event. What he "hates" is the post processing of the images—at which he is very slow—and all the marketing effort that it takes to really succeed. So, for the time being at least, he does his day job at Fannie Mae.

Jitesh was born in Delhi, the oldest son of an electrical engineer father and a traditional housewife mother. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering from Aligarh Moslem University in 1998. He added a MBA from Nirma University, Ahmedabad, in 2000. Sometime after this, he moved to the United States to join his father's family, who had immigrated to Maryland a few years previous. Jitesh then rounded out his credentials by earning a Masters of Electrical Engineering from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 2003.

For a graduation present, his father gave him a Canon 300D camera. Jitesh quickly mastered its op-

eration and accepted the invitation of a friend to "shoot" his wedding. Much to his surprise, his efforts netted him \$1,500! Working with another friend who did the marketing, Jitesh shot three more weddings, all with equal success.

About this time, one of the applications he had submitted after graduation resulted in a job offer from the U.S.A.F. at a facility in Virginia. Jitesh willingly accepted the offer. He soon discovered the Northern Virginia Camera Club and became a member of this group. He found it to be a rewarding experience, learned a lot by submitting images in competitions, and even attended the NECCC Convention in Amherst, MA. He developed an interest in landscape photography and managed to garner several competition awards.

After two years as a systems analyst for the Air Force, Jitesh was offered a job by Freddie Mac. His supervisors there recognized his outstanding organizational skills and soon promoted him to Project Manager. After seven years with Freddie, Jitesh moved to Fannie Mae, where he is currently employed.

In the meantime, a change came about in his personal life. In 2007, Jitesh traveled to India to meet Meenakshi, the daughter of one of his father's classmates from his days in engineering school. (Yes, this was the beginning of a traditional Indian "arranged marriage.") After suitable interviews, Jitesh and Meenakshi found themselves to be compatible and became engaged. They were married in July 2007. Meenakshi is a physician, educated in India, and now working for a Master's Degree in Public Health. She hopes to do her residency soon and would like to become a neurologist. The couple now resides in Maryland.

During the past few years, Jitesh has shot several more weddings. He also does studio work and owns all the necessary lights and equipment. He often uses a tripod for the wedding group shots, but prefers the flexibility of shooting "hand held." His camera of choice is a Canon 5D. He favors Lightroom to organize and process his RAW images, does additional processing in Photoshop, and sometimes uses his Canon i9100 printer to do "draft" prints. He sends his images to White House Custom Color for final printing and purchases his wedding albums from Art Leather.

His many other interests include playing badminton and soccer, hiking and biking, and gourmet cooking. At one point in his life he considered opening a restaurant. The hiking has led him to developing his skills as a landscape photographer. In December 2009, he took New Zealand's famous Milford Hike, a tramp on the South Island that needs to be booked almost a year in advance. He carried his 5D and 17-40mm and 70-200mm lenses in his backpack. Next year he hopes to climb the Aconcagua, the highest mountain in the world outside the Himalayas. He will start from Mendoza, Argentina and plans to carry his 5D, perhaps with the lighter 24-105mm L lens.

Jitesh is a member of the Judges Committee here at NBCC. He is amazed at how many candidates from our database he has to call in order to get a qualified person to judge our competitions. He also occasionally competes in the Novice Electronic Category. His image "Tomb of Remembrance 2" earned an honorable mention at the February competition on geometric shapes.

Text and Photo by Jean Hanson

March Competition Judge: Mary Ann Seton

Stephen Gelband

Mary Ann is both a past Vice-President for Competitions and past President of the Northern Virginia Photographic Society (NVPS). She is a 1995 graduate of the Washington School of Photography and has augmented that training with many photography and Adobe Photoshop courses, including the famed Freeman Patterson's Photography and Visual Design Workshop in 2007. After retiring as human resources manager for the National Education Association, she worked as a professional photographer and videographer from 1997 to 2009 and for several years ran a portrait studio in her home. Now retired again, she provides her professional services very part-time, wishing to focus on her own photo art as her primary interest.

Her images have won numerous awards in the NVPS, ribbons from the Vienna Photography Shows where she won "Best In Show" in 2001; and several of her images have been juried into the Art League of Alexandria's monthly exhibits at The Torpedo Factory, where she also won a prestigious Equal Award in 2002 and maintained a bin for two years. She was named NVPS "Photographer of the Year" in both 2005 and 2006 in the category of Enhanced Prints and won two "Print of the Year" awards in 2000 and two again in 2005. Her image "All Truckered Out" won first place in the AAA World 2009 photo contest.

She has presented programs on "Digital Magic," which explore the roots of her Photoshop learning



"All Truckered Out" © Mary Ann Seton

and the creative processes employed. She has had photographs published in the *élan* magazine and two articles were written about her and her work in that same publication in 2003 and 2005. She was the featured photographer on the cable TV program "Photographers of Northern Virginia" in 2002 and also substituted for the regular host on occasion during subsequent years. Experienced as a judge and critique leader, Mary Ann also completed Joe Miller's Seminar on Judging in December 2006.

Mary Ann and her husband Dick live in the northern Shenandoah Valley area, where she has organized and leads a photography club in her new active adult community, frequently mentoring novice photographers who have now found enough time to devote to learning the constantly changing world of digital photography and its accompanying software.

February, 2011, Splinters from the Board

Bob Dargel, President

The 31st George W. Glennie club competition is underway. NBCC members interested in participating should check out the competition rules at www.mvcameraclub.org and contact me as soon as possible (rdargel@aol.com).

It is time for the president to appoint members to the officer nomination committee and the committee to select 2012-13 competition subjects. If interested in participating in these committees, drop me an e-mail.

The Robert Creamer workshop on scanner photography, cancelled on January 26 due to weather, is being rescheduled for March 23.

The field trip to Annapolis, which was also cancelled due to bad weather, has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 7.

The number of people on the membership waiting list has increased to 49.

A suggestion was made that members check out the National Association of Professional Photographers Web site to access an abundance of fine on-line photography training videos.



Program Night, March 23 (cont'd from p.1)

formation, and transitions. The new beauty of his subject twists its way out of the familiar. The expansive surrounding deep black becomes graphic shapes that isolate, yet allows the subject to merge towards the viewer. It is that—teamed with his imagination—that allows him to search, analyze, observe, speculate, and capture the true essence of his interpretations. Working with a flat bed scanner is not without limitations. New procedures and techniques push the artwork and demand growth as an artist. His imagination and determination in conjunction with a new understanding of patience constantly gives birth to new ideas. Concepts of composition and the decisive moment provide new rules to break.

“Robert Creamer has a deep respect for change—its subtle palette and patterns, the surprising structure of decay, and the integrity that graces every stage of life. In a Creamer photograph a browning petal becomes as glorious as the newly opened bloom. The numbered museum specimen transforms into contemporary sculpture. The arresting detail and Baroque luminosity of these photographs are the result of a lifetime behind a camera and a recently discovered technique—the flatbed scanner. Creamer’s careful use of rich blacks or negative space helps emphasize the light of the subjects and allude to the mystery of an ever-present dark.” *Transitions – Smithsonian Institution Museum of Natural History 2007.*

Robert Creamer teaches digital photography at CCBC. Visit his Web site at www.creamerphoto.com.

Robert was scheduled to present at the NBCC on January 26, but the snowstorm forced us to cancel the meeting. Fortunately, he has graciously agreed to move his program to March.



“Monks Poppy” © Robert Creamer

Program Night, March 30 (cont'd from p.1)

phases in the life of each flower and to do this in any kind of weather. He enhances the work of the camera and the lens through computer processing techniques. He often makes several exposures (10 to 25) for each composition by using a tripod and varying the f. stop and the focal point of each exposure. He then composites the multiple exposures together in the computer to create the final image. With this technique, he is able to control clarity and tones to achieve the effect he has in mind. He wants his images to be both impressionistic and evocative, and to effect a communication between the viewer and himself, the artist.

Bert produces all of his work in limited editions of 25. He uses carefully chosen 100 percent cotton watercolor paper or canvas, and prints on either an Epson 3800 or 9600 printer with archival pigmented inks.

Bert has won many honors nationally with his prints, and was chosen in 2009 to have a solo show of his images at the Lishui International Photo Festival in Lishui, China. He has curated shows and published articles in photo magazines. His work can be seen at www.cameraflora.org.



Photo © Bert Shankman

NBCC Field Trip – March 19 **Harper's Ferry to Point of Rocks, Exploring** **the CSX Main Line**

John Barnes

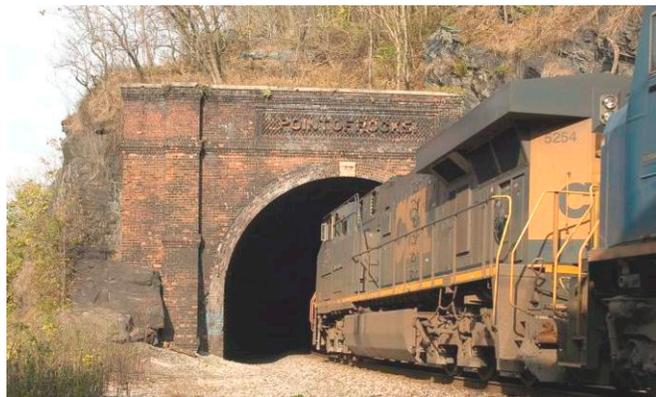
NBCC's September 2011 monthly competition will feature "Planes, Trains, and Boats." Our March field trip is designed to provide unique opportunities to photograph trains in their real life environment. While trackage and architecture do not appear to be part of the September competition, there are numerous good pictures to be found.

We will be exploring several locations on the Cumberland and Washington Divisions of the CSX main line between the east coast and Chicago.

The idea is to rendezvous at Harper's Ferry at 9:30 am on March 19. Amtrak's Capitol Limited is scheduled to depart Cumberland, MD at about that time and we want to be well positioned as it passes through Harper's Ferry. We can expect a number of freight trains going both eastbound and westbound. The schedule calls for the train to arrive at Union Station at 1:10 pm, but I think it is somewhat likely that it will be a little late. The return trip does not start until 4:05 pm. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only passenger train that we can expect to see that day.

Once we are satisfied that we have "done" Harper's Ferry, we will move on to Brunswick, MD. This is a nice little working town. In addition to the working yards of the CSX there is an attractive station and a museum dedicated to the B&O line and life around it. There are also a couple of places where our group could have lunch together.

Our final stop for the day will be at Point of Rocks. Here we can take in the iconic station and the interesting trackage where the CSX Metropolitan Division and its Washington Division join together to become the main line of the railroad. There is also an interesting tunnel portal.

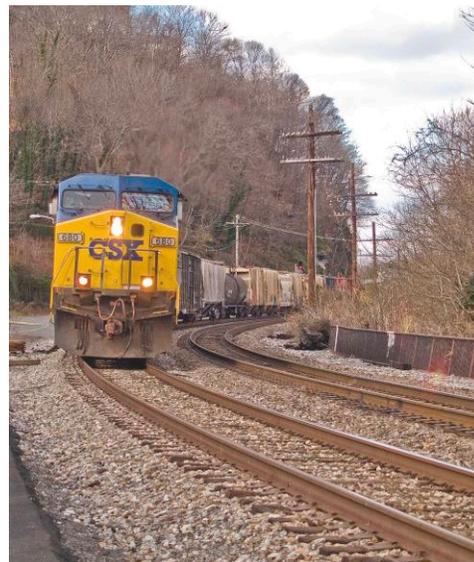


Photos © John Barnes

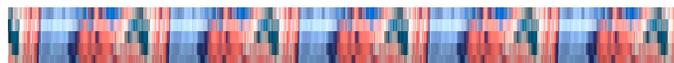
March, 2011

I have included a couple of photos from my earlier explorations of this terrain.

If you plan to go on this trip, please let me know so that I can pass along additional information as it becomes available.



Directions and further details will be distributed by e-mail during March.



NBCC Field Trip – April 2 **Richmond Gardens**

Cynthia Keith

The April field trip will be held on Saturday, April 2 (rain date: Saturday, April 9) to the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and Maymont in Richmond, VA. A short two-hour drive from Bethesda, we will meet at 9:00 am at the visitors' center at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. This beautiful garden features 50 acres of formal gardens, an expansive conservatory and a meadow. At this time of year we should be able to photograph masses of daffodils and tulips, cherry and crabapple trees, as well as their special orchid exhibit. Tripods are permitted. Admission is \$10 for adults. For additional information about the garden, please visit their Web site at www.lewisginter.org.

After lunch in their café, we will travel to nearby Maymont, a public park covering over 100 acres. Near the 1893 mansion we will photograph the formal Italian and Japanese gardens. But Maymont also has an extensive arboretum featuring trees from around the world, many of which will be in bloom in April. Maymont is also well known as a family destination with captive native animals, an aviary, and a children's farm. On a lovely spring day, there will be many opportunities for candid photos of visitors. A tram is available to help weary photographers get around in comfort. The park is open until 5:00 pm. For additional information, please visit their Web site at www.maymont.org.

High Performance Photo Computer (Part 1)

Text by Tom Field

Photographers are not mainstream computer users. Sure, any consumer wants a fast and reliable computer that does not cost too much. But what are the unique requirements that make a computer most suitable for digital photography? Here is my priority list:

1. **Plenty of Storage.** Photographers generate thousands or tens of thousands of large image files. Photoshop files, in particular, can become gigantic: layer stacks, smart objects, and stitched panoramas. Our new cameras can capture exquisite high-definition video, which is even more storage-hungry: typically 4 gigabytes for one 12-minute clip, and that's before editing begins. Then, of course, we all make backup copies (doubling or tripling the total size). One thing for certain: our storage requirements will continue to expand, so our approach should facilitate periodic upgrades.
2. **Fast Access.** Does your creative process come to a halt when opening or saving a big Photoshop file? When flipping through a vast library of images, do Lightroom and Bridge provide instant display of previews upon your fingertip commands, or instead provide a severe test of your patience? The bottleneck in these activities is the disk drive. No matter how fast the processor, slow access to storage can hamper your productivity and dampen the creative fire.
3. **Lots of Memory.** Having plenty of random access memory (RAM) helps Photoshop work efficiently. Otherwise, when Photoshop runs out of memory it starts spooling large amounts of data on and off disk—bogging down to a crawl. How much RAM is enough? It depends on what you do: how large are your files, how many do you open at one time, what processing tasks do you typically perform? 6GB is a good starting point for most photographers, and 16GB is not too much. RAM prices are lower than ever. If you install more memory than your applications need, the operating system can use it as a cache to speed things up. Note: you need a 64-bit operating system to use RAM above 3GB or so.
4. **Fast CPU.** A high-performance central processing unit (CPU) can plow quickly through image processing workload, but CPU speed is not the top factor for photographers. In fact, most of the time your CPU is idle: nothing to do, or waiting for the disk drive to pass data. But certain CPU-intensive tasks will benefit from a fast processor with

multiple cores: compositing images (HDR, pano blending), lens correction, context-aware tools, complex filters, generating 100% previews, or video rendering (such as slide shows to DVD video). A fast CPU becomes more effective with high-speed storage and lots of RAM.

5. **Graphics.** Video game enthusiasts comprise the biggest market for high-performance computers. But unlike gamers, photographers do not need high-performance video cards in their computers. Only a few Photoshop functions take any advantage of the Graphics Processing Unit (GPU). A basic video card at \$100, or a high-power card set at \$2,000 will perform about the same for photographers. Instead, we are focused (literally) on the monitor, where we appreciate high resolution, broad color gamut, maximum dynamic range, and wide viewing angle. So put your money into the monitor, not the video card. Connect it with a digital video interface such as DVI or HDMI (for a crisp display with less drift after calibration) and avoid the old analog video (VGA). Multiple monitors are very useful: calibrate the better monitor and use it for full-screen image display, while everything else (toolbars, palettes, windows) goes on the lesser monitor. I highly recommend the Dell or Apple 30-inch ultra-high resolution monitors, if your budget, desk space, and computer allow. A good quality HDTV (1080) can be an excellent value as a big computer monitor, and should be calibrated using your standard method. Be sure the HDTV dynamic adjustments and over-scan (edge cropping) are turned off.

Custom Photo Computer

Where do you get a photographer's computer? You can pick up a "vanilla" PC from a mass electronics retailer, and some models are remarkably cheap. But as you move into higher performance, the compromises can make an off-the-shelf PC less of a value for photography. You can try the customization options offered by national brands like Dell and Apple, but beware of excessive markups on the available performance upgrades. For example, the memory I just purchased for \$180 would be a whopping \$1,775 upgrade for an Apple Mac Pro.

For the best photo PC value, you will need to commission a fully-custom computer (e.g., from a local shop), or build it yourself (look for a future how-to article). As a 25-year hobbyist I have built dozens of specialty computers for audio, video and photography. Here is what I am recommending for today's custom photo PC:

1. **Solid State Drive.** A good SSD may be the most expensive single component in a photo PC, but it will make the biggest difference in performance. Windows 7 is (mostly) optimized for SSD; it loads in seconds instead of minutes. Lightroom catalogs are remarkably responsive. The SSD relieves the principal bottleneck in a computer: slow access to system files and cached data. An SSD contains no moving parts, consumes low power, and is more reliable (and far less fragile) than a spinning hard disk. As prices fall and performance improves, this technology will become mainstream.
2. **Hard Disk Drive.** Alas, SSDs do not yet have the capacity to store a big image library. For such bulk storage, choose 7200-rpm hard drives. You can get faster drives (up to 15000-rpm) but they are loud, hot, and costly. I no longer recommend performance-boosting RAID 0: hard disks are plenty large and sufficiently fast to avoid the risks and complications of RAID 0. And with a good backup strategy, you should not need the reliability of RAID 1 or RAID 5. For highest reliability choose server-class “enterprise” disks, but remember that all disks can fail and you must keep good backups. You can physically mount some disks inside the computer, connected with SATA. Or you can keep your images on disk drives outside the computer; preferably connected with eSATA or USB3 (USB2 is too slow except for backups). Keep extra capacity: performance declines dramatically as hard disks fill up.
3. **CPU.** Intel and AMD have finally acquiesced to PC enthusiasts who “overclock” their processors, boosting performance by up to 70 percent. The latest CPUs support this practice well. It requires some technical knowledge, time for experimentation, as well as special cooling hardware for the hard-working CPU. Your local PC shop may or may not be willing to configure your overclock, and national brands do not support this at all. The newest Intel Core i7-2600K (selling for about \$300) can be operated at 5 GHz, and yet it drops back to a power-saving 1.6 GHz (only 5 watts!) when idle.
4. **Save Your Money.** Do not splurge on an expensive video graphics card unless you are playing games or doing a lot of video editing. A single DVD writer should suffice, though some vendors happily sell two drives and collect the markup (a name brand DVD/RW costs them under \$20). Do not buy new speakers, keyboard, or mouse unless you need them (and there is no reason to pay premium prices for these). Dial-up modem—forget it!

Next month we will talk about easily migrating Photoshop and Lightroom settings/presets to a new computer; laptops as a tool for photographers; a brief comparison of Apple’s Macintosh and Microsoft’s Windows; and the need to keep backups of your photos.

Glossary

DVI: Digital Visual Interface, connects between a computer and digital monitor.

eSATA: external SATA, intended for connecting external disk drives to a computer, mechanically suitable for plugging/unplugging.

HDD: Hard Disk Drive; a mass storage device: low-cost, high-capacity, moderate speed; magnetically encodes data onto spinning platters; vulnerable to mechanical damage, especially when spinning.

HDMI: High-Definition Multimedia Interface; a digital video and audio interface commonly used for HDTV; the video portion is generally compatible with DVI.

Port Multiplier: chip that fans out a single high-speed SATA interface to several disk drives, suitable for connecting five, ten or more external disks simultaneously to one computer. Note: only certain SATA interface controllers recognize port multipliers.

RAID: Redundant Array of Independent Disks (formerly “Inexpensive Disks”); RAID 0 divides data among multiple disk drives to increase input/output performance, while RAID 1 and RAID 5 replicate data among multiple disk drives to increase reliability.

RAM: Random Access Memory; bulk high-speed memory for computer processor, volatile (erased when power removed).

SATA: a high-speed serial interface to a disk drive, currently 3 or 6 gigabits per second, designed for internal installation but not frequent plugging and unplugging.

SSD: Solid State Drive; a mass storage device: high-cost, low-capacity, very high speed, low power, high reliability; stores data in non-volatile memory (no moving parts).

USB2: a relatively low-speed serial interface limited to 0.48 gigabits per second and supplying moderate power for some external devices.

USB3: new version of USB also known as Super-Speed, about ten times faster than USB2 and supplying more power to devices; very suitable for external disk drives.

VGA: Video Graphics Array; the old analog video standard survives from 1987; not recommended for photography due to instability and lack of precision.

A Weekend in Córdoba, Spain

Text and Photos by José M. Cartas

As many of you know, I come from Córdoba, Argentina. Last May, thanks to the hospitality of a colleague's parents, I had the opportunity to visit my hometown's namesake in Spain. It was only for a weekend, but it was long enough to appreciate the beauty of the city and its charm.

The Spanish Córdoba is located in the southern region of Andalusia. It is an old city, originally settled by the Carthaginians and later conquered by the Romans in 206 BC. Some old Roman ruins can still be found in the city, among them a temple, the walls surrounding the old city, and the Roman Bridge over the Guadalquivir river. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Córdoba was conquered by the Visigoths in the 6th century. But the most lasting mark was left by the Moors. After they conquered the Iberian Peninsula in the early 8th century, the city became the thriving capital of the caliphate of Al-Andalus. This was the time when Córdoba stood out as perhaps the largest and most sophisticated city in Europe; where Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together in harmony and prospered. This was the time when science and philosophy flourished, with names such as Ibn Hazm, Averroes, or Maimonides.

Although the Arab occupation of Spain and Portugal lasted until late in the 15th century, Córdoba itself was captured by King Ferdinand III of Castile in 1236. After the Spanish occupation, the city entered a period of decline. The Christians did not have the technology to maintain the waterworks constructed by the Arabs and let them deteriorate. The decline of the city continued well after the Renaissance times. Only in the early 20th century did its population and economy slowly begin to recover.



What visitors find today is a collection of impressive architectural icons, dating from several points in history. Upon entering the old city by one of the three remaining gates (of the original thirteen in the Roman wall), there is a tightly knit web of narrow alleys, each with its particular appeal and nickname, such as "I'm Lost" or "You Are not Here."

One of the wall gates gives access to the *Judería*, or Jewish quarter, which dates back to the Romans and the Goths. It is there that the city erected monuments to its most important sons: Seneca, Averroes, and Maimonides. It is not a coincidence that tourists can find plenty of jewelry and silversmith shops in that area. The *Judería* still houses a synagogue (built in 1315), as well as the Chapel of Saint Bartholomew. This chapel was constructed in the *Mudejar* style, developed by the Moors who stayed in Spain after the *Reconquista* (the name the Spanish gave to their quest to recapture the country).

It is this area that houses the *Calleja de las Flores*, literally the "Alley of the Flowers." The photo alone should explain where this narrow alley, which opens into a courtyard with several residences, got its name. From the end of the *Calleja de las Flores*, one finds perhaps the most post-card-like picture of the city, with



the alley in the foreground and the tower of the *Mezquita-Catedral* (Mosque-Cathedral) in the background. Only problem: the luminosity between the tower of the Mosque and the walls of the houses goes well beyond what any camera can capture. The photo shown here is an HDR image of five exposures, with a one-stop difference between each of them. Because it was very early on Sunday, I managed to take all the shots with no one walking into the picture.

Without any doubt, visiting the *Mezquita-Catedral* constitutes the highlight of any trip to Córdoba. Built on the site of a former Christian church, the construction of the Mosque started in 785 in a style that combined Roman, Gothic, Byzantine, Syrian, and Persian elements. Over 200 years, new elements were added to the original construction, doubling its size to around six acres. The exterior is a heavy, enormous construction with plenty of massive, highly decorative doors around it. Sealed when the mosque was converted into a cathedral, most of these doors are now closed and, from the exterior, uninviting. However, one



can imagine that during Moorish times the many open doors made the structure much brighter and much more welcoming. Entering the building, visitors find a courtyard with plants and several water fountains, where they can relax before or after touring the prayer hall. The prayer hall is filled with more than 800 columns of marble, jasper, onyx, and granite, all which sustain double arches that seem to extend into infinity. Not much light comes into the interior of the building these days, but I was lucky enough to glimpse a ray of light bouncing on the columns and on the floor, producing a wonderful reflection with the complete color spectrum. The walls and doors inside the building are heavily decorated with arabesques, and one can spend hours on end looking at all the details.



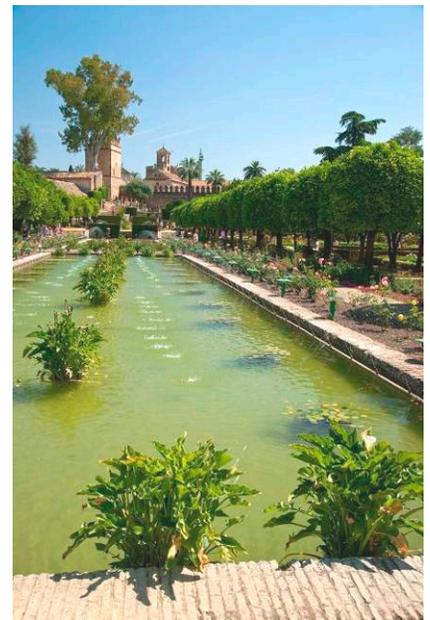
After the Spaniards recaptured the city in 1236, the mosque was reconverted to a Christian sanctuary and in 1523—with the blessing of Emperor Charles V—was consecrated as a cathedral. The central space of the mosque was rebuilt to host the altar and the nave. The work took more than 200 years, mixing the original Gothic style with Baroque and Renaissance. It is interesting to look upwards and find, close to one another, the succession of archways from the



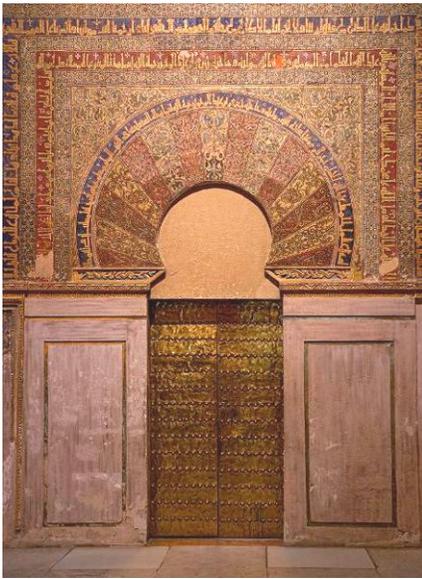
Arab construction and the heavy baroque design of the Christian ceiling in the center of the cathedral.

But Córdoba is much more than the *Mezquita-Catedral*. Not far from it is the *Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos* (Palace of the Christian Kings), which served as the summer residence for the Spanish monarchs. The palace was reconstructed in 1328 by King Alfonso XI, of Castile and Leon. The main building covers a little more than an acre, and contains Arab baths and Roman mosaics. But the most impressive part of the complex are the extensive gardens, designed in characteristic

Moorish style with ponds, water cascades, and plants. It was a pleasure to spend several hours strolling and photographing in the gardens, which provided a much needed escape from the very high temperatures outside (and remember, it was May—a relatively cool month—and not August!).



The city also proved to be a treasure trove for someone looking to photograph doors and windows. There were plenty of them, and in various styles: from the typical colonial Spanish to the elaborate Arab pattern; all around the walls surrounding the *Mezquita-Catedral* and inside the prayer hall; in churches and private houses. I shot full frames and elaborate details. Actually, I could have prepared an article only on the doors and windows I photographed in Córdoba.



Beyond buildings, I found a very lively city. Natives and tourists walking in the streets, sitting in the many outdoor cafés and enjoying a good chat, or accompanying some tapas (typical small dishes) with a good wine or a beer in a bar or a restaurant.

Unfortunately, I missed the *Festival de los Patios* by a couple of weeks. This festival has private homes opening themselves to the public to show off their floral displays and compete for the most beautiful patio. Thankfully, I did manage to get a peek to some of these typical charming courtyards, which clearly show the Arab heritage. I also caught the end of the *Feria de Córdoba*, a very popular event with lots of flamenco, modern music, food, and drinking. The fair is held during weekends at a municipal ground specifically designed for it, and goes on until the wee hours of the morning. When I woke up very early on Sunday to catch the sunrise for my photography,



plenty of people still roamed the streets. But, while I myself was just out of bed and heading into the city, they were instead going back home for a much needed rest after a long night.



Education Committee

March 3. Composition and the Art of "Making" Photographs.

Nikhil Bahl will teach a 2½-hour class that will focus on the essentials of good composition and how to use available light to your advantage and maximize the impact of your photographs. This class is geared towards beginner to intermediate level photographers.

The program will last from 7:15 to 9:45 pm. The cost is \$25. The group size will be limited to eight participants. Contact Nikhil at nikhilbahl@gmail.com.

March 8, 17, and 22. Matting and Framing.

Alan Sislen will be conducting in his home studio in Bethesda a 3½-hour matting and framing mini-workshop. Topics to be covered include: Do-it-yourself vs. paying for it to be done; Pre-cut vs. cut-it-yourself (mat, glass, frames); Archival issues: mat board, backing, glass, frames, mounting materials; Mat boards—archival? colors? 4-ply vs. 8-ply?, border sizes?, single or double mat?; To reveal, or not reveal; Frames—materials (wood, aluminum, etc.), size, color, quality, costs; Tools/supplies—hinges, corners, hangers, wires, blades, glass cutters, mat cut-

ters, framing tools; To mount, or not to mount; Deckling fine art prints; Competition vs. exhibition mounting; Sources and costs for all materials; Demonstration of matting and framing multiple prints.

The program will last from 7:00 to 10:30 pm (1:00 to 4:30 pm on March 22) and includes snacks and materials. The cost will be \$8 per persons. The group size will be limited to ten participants. If you are interested in attending, please e-mail Alan as soon as possible (Alan@AlanSislenPhotography.com).

March 10 and April 14. Beyond the Rules.

Nikhil Bahl will teach a two-session class for intermediate to advanced photographers. A two-hour classroom presentation will give the participants various ideas on how to think beyond the rules of photography. A very simple assignment will be given to participants, who will then meet back in a month to share the results and receive feedback.

The program will last from 7:15 to 9:30 pm. The cost is \$40. The group size will be limited to eight participants. Contact Nikhil at nikhilbahl@gmail.com.

April 7. Introduction to Camera RAW and the pros and cons of shooting RAW or JPG.

Nikhil Bahl will teach a 2½-hour class that will go over the advantages and disadvantages of JPG and RAW files. The class will also include a full demonstration of how an image (JPG or RAW) can be processed in Adobe Camera RAW (common to both Lightroom and Photoshop).

The program will last from 7:15 to 9:45 pm. The cost is \$25. The group size will be limited to eight participants. Contact Nikhil at nikhilbahl@gmail.com.



**International Conference
September 18-24, 2011**

Photo Essay 2011

Sunday, March 20, 3:00 – 5:00pm

Stu Mathison

Mark your calendars: the Photo Essay 2011 Program is here! This is our Club's third decade presenting slide shows of beautiful photographs set to music. Join us for an afternoon of entertainment for our members, their families and friends, and other clubs around the area. Past programs have been awe inspiring, making this our most popular event of the year.

The presentation will be on **Sunday afternoon, March 20, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm in the auditorium of Rosborough Center at Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg.** (Driving directions can be found at: <http://www.asburymethodistvillage.calls.net/driving.htm>)

The auditorium seats 250 in a comfortable, theater-like setting.

Every year after the show, people talk about the powerful impact of the essays and ask whether the show will be presented again, or whether the show will be available on a DVD or on the Club's Web site. Unfortunately, we cannot make the show available in this fashion, so if you want to see some of the best photo essays available you will have to attend the presentation on March 20.

At the risk of losing the element of surprise, here is a preview of some of this year's photo essays. We will see some excellent nature photography in essays entitled "Romancing the Stone," "Colors of Yellowstone," "Four Gardens in Philadelphia," "All God's Creatures," and "If Animals Could Talk." We will see some extraordinary travel photography highlighting and revealing French Markets, the French Countryside, Hot Air Balloons over Cappadocia, the Atacama Desert in Chile, the Arctic in Norway, and Lake Powell in Arizona and Utah. And we will see topical essays on Faces of India, Windows of the World, the East Broadtop Railway, and Night Scenes from around the world. These essays—and others—will delight you, entertain you, and perhaps motivate you to develop your own photo essays for presentation to family, friends, colleagues, and others.

Please make sure this once-a-year-event is on your calendar, and come early to ensure good seating! Previous shows have nearly filled the auditorium.





PSA News

Judy Burr, NBCC PSA representative

In an earlier column, I mentioned the PSA Collection in Oklahoma City. The International Photography Hall of fame is located there also, and the link below leads to their Web site (http://iphf.org/About/About_Us.html), featuring an interesting video about their collection and the importance of photography.

The February issue of the *PSA Journal* includes the first article about the annual conference in Colorado Springs. Future issues will provide information on the classes, tours, and programs at the conference. The pictures in the article give you an idea of what photo ops there are in the Colorado Springs area.

The issue also has the last book and software reviews by Stan Ashbrook, who sadly passed away last December. Stan was very instrumental in helping to organize the Electronic Imaging Division of PSA and encouraged members to take up digital photography using all the technology available. Not only did he write reviews for the *PSA Journal*, he wrote many "how to" articles over the years and received the Gold Star Editorial Award in 2009. His deep involvement in the digital world was apparent in his reviews of new software that many of us did not even know existed. The books reviewed are: *Ralph Velasco on Travel Photography—101 Tips for Developing Your Photographic Eye* by Ralph Velasco, and *Children's Portrait Photography Handbook—Techniques for Digital Photographers*, 2nd edition by Bill Hurter. A question in the first book is one we can all ask ourselves: **"Do I see what others miss, or miss what others see?"** Bill Hurter shows photographers how the top children's photographers capture their images. The software reviews may be of interest to those who contribute to the NBCC photo essay program, as they are about the new versions of ProShow Gold and Producer, and the new ProShow Transition Pack Volume 1. These reviews may help you decide whether to buy ProShow Gold or upgrade your current software.

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom is the subject of *Drury's Digital Diary* for three months. This month, he discusses a brief history of the program, using it as a database program, and who can benefit from using it. Drury will alternate between Lightroom and Photoshop for at least the next year. He will also be discuss-

ing the current status of ACR (Adobe Camera Raw). With his regular column, this author helps keep readers up-to-date with the digital world in terms of software.

Several times a year, a camera club is the subject of *Focus* in the *PSA Journal*, and this month the featured club is the Lancaster Photography Association in California. They are 40 years old with about 160 members, and the article gives you an idea of what a very active club can achieve through community service, exhibits, and field trips. Two short articles are also of interest: one on what an eligible photojournalism image is by Lynn Maniscalco, who is a top ranked PJ photographer in PSA; while the other shows the winning 3D images of the year.

Winter may not be your favorite time to make photographs outside, but an article on "Still Life Photography" may give you some ideas for shooting inside. Making a good still life requires a sense of composition and provides an opportunity to practice lighting techniques. An article on Cuba may interest those who love travel and foreign places; and one on PSA scholarships will show you how PSA helps students with their career training in photography.

As mentioned in a previous column, I posed the question about how other clubs handle situations when judges do not follow a competition's topic, and how they handle rule infractions. The variety of answers showed that clubs have to decide what is best for them. One club just has four categories: general nature, general pictorial, assigned nature, and assigned pictorial; if an entry does not meet the category as assigned, the photo is moved to the general category. They do talk to members so the issue does not recur; they try not to drive members away by being too strict. Another said "Why have a theme if it is not enforced?" since it is not fair to those who do comply, and suggested that topics be made simpler to avoid misunderstanding. When clubs have a panel of judges, the photos are given low scores rather than disqualifying them. It was suggested that clubs may be too stringent in their interpretation and thereby lose sight of the goals of competition: to encourage members to participate in competition as well as other club activities. Another said "rules are rules" and has a club rep step in to remove a photo that does not meet the topic, or rule when a judge hesitates doing so. Another club has the competition committee disqualify an image where there is blatant disregard of the topic or rules, and does not have the judge score the photo. The last comment suggested that a club should only set rules if they are comfortable in enforcing them. Perhaps these comments will help the NBCC Competition Committee in deciding how to deal with such matters in the future.

Results of Competition for February 2011 – Geometric Shape(s)

Competition Judge: James Steele

Print

Traditional – 14 entries

1 st	Dan McDermott	Monitor Turret
2 nd	Chuck Bress	Leo's Room, IV
3 rd	Chuck Bress	Geometric Shapes
HM	Larry Loewinger	Steeple Wall
HM	Bill Richards	Circular Reflections

Novice – 12 entries

1 st	Cheryl Naulty	Old Town Meters
2 nd	Mike Fleming	Through the Roof
3 rd	Dawn Sikkema	After Calder
HM	Stuart Glickman	Beach Umbrella

Advanced – 8 entries

1 st	Chris Hanessian	Hallway Bend
2 nd	Dan McDermott	Weird Light
3 rd	Jean Yuan	Green Circular Building



Ask Tim Grey

Is there a single mistake you feel is most common with digital photo optimization? Something you see often that we should be aware of for purposes of avoiding?

This question seems timely, as over the past few days I have happened upon quite a few photography galleries, and I was surprised just how many images had what I consider to be perhaps the most common problem. That problem would be a crooked horizon.

I spend a tremendous amount of time providing feedback to photographers, helping them make the most of their photographic images, and of course correcting my own photographic mistakes. The crooked horizon is not necessarily the most common mistake an image starts out with, but in my experience it is the most common mistake that does not get fixed. I think many photographers just do not pay particularly close attention to this issue.

The obvious situation is an image that literally contains a horizon, and in which that horizon is not perfectly horizontal. But the same basic issue happens whenever a line that should be perfectly horizontal or vertical is slightly askew. And sometimes the issue is that two lines that should be parallel are not. For example, I recently saw a photo that included a dock on a lake as well as a horizon line, and the dock was perfectly horizontal but the horizon was slanted a bit.

Electronic

Traditional – 21 entries

1 st	Jay Gartenhaus	The Food Court
2 nd	Jean Yuan	Shape
3 rd	Allan Melser	Pipe Dreams
HM	Ira Adler	Shelborn Museum, Burlington, VT
HM	James Hammack	Ravenel Bridge from Below
HM	Rebecca Tidman	Rope and Red Arrow
HM	John Willis	Sunflower Rays 2

Novice – 27 entries

1 st	Dawn Sikkema	The House of Orange
2 nd	John Pan	Overtime
3 rd	Lori Ducharme	Under the Grand Arch
HM	Jitesh Batra	Tomb of Remembrance 2
HM	Stuart Glickman	Fancy Beach Chair
HM	Cynthia Hunter	Sky Scraper
HM	Judy Manesh	Basilica Steps
HM	John Pan	Reflections II
HM	Louise Roy	Great Heights

Advanced – 23 entries

1 st	José Cartas	Sunset in the Desert
2 nd	Melissa Clark	Mondrian Walls
3 rd	Judy Burr	Theater Triangles
HM	Willem Bier	Jefferson in the Capitol
HM	Melissa Clark	Blue Railing Yellow Walls
HM	Frank Herzog	Steam Wheels
HM	Alex Hoffmaister	Court House Interpretation



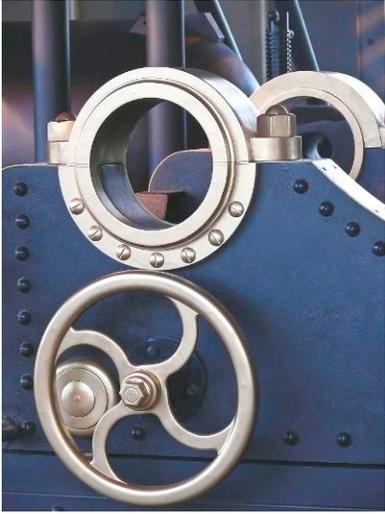
When the image is simply crooked, a simple rotation by an arbitrary number of degrees will solve the problem. When there are lines that are not parallel but should be, a transformation of the image is going to be necessary (using tools such as Lens Correction or the Transform commands).

The key is to be aware of this issue, and to actually evaluate the image in a quantitative way to ensure it is not an issue. One quick way to accomplish this is to draw a bounding box with the Crop tool or the Rectangular Marquee selection tool, adjusting the edge of that bounding box very near a line that should be perfectly horizontal or vertical. If you display the Rulers on the image (View > Rulers) you can also simply drag from one of the rulers into the image to place a guide that will be horizontal or vertical. These guides can be cleared when you are done using them by choosing View > Clear Guides.

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February 2011 Competitions — 1st Place Winners

Print



Traditional – Dan McDermott – “Monitor Turret”



Novice – Cheryl Naulty– “Old Time Meters”

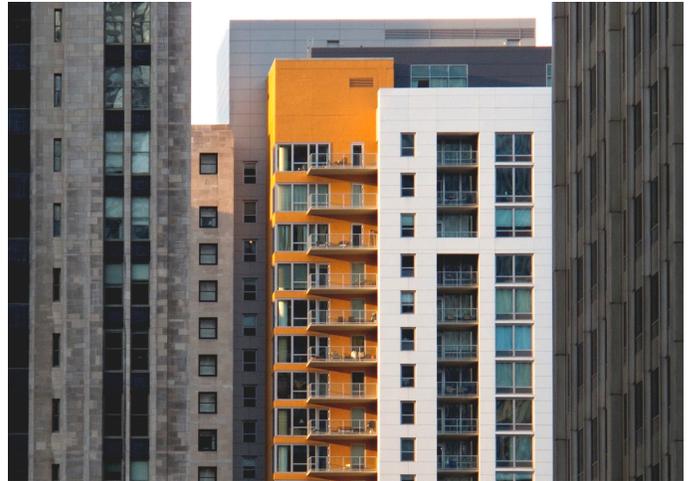


Advanced – Chris Hanessian – “Hallway Bend”

Electronic



Traditional – Jay Gartenhaus – “The Food Court”



Novice – Dawn Sikkema – “The House of Orange”



Advanced – José Cartas – “Sunset in the Desert”

Cumulative Scores for 2010-2011; Through February, 2011

Traditional Prints

64	Chuck Bress
44	Bill Richards
24	Bob Dargel
16	Barbara DeLouise
16	Bill Seelig
15	Jean Yuan
14	Bruce Cyr
12	Les Trachtman
10	Willem Bier
10	Dan McDermott
9	Jack Rosenberg
8	Chris Hanessian
8	Bill Ho
8	John Willis
6	Mike Fleming
6	Jay Gartenhaus
6	Sharyn Greberman
6	Larry Loewinger

Novice Prints

42	Dawn Sikkema
41	Stuart Glickman
38	Ying Huang
25	Cheryl Naulty
15	Mike Fleming
10	John Barnes
10	Peter Hui
9	Art Hyder
8	Marcia Loeb

Advanced Prints

68	Chris Hanessian
24	Dan McDermott
18	Bill Ho
18	Bill Seelig
8	Marcia Loeb
8	Jean Yuan

Traditional Electronic

51	Jay Gartenhaus
40	John Willis
38	Rebecca Tidman
27	Jean Yuan
26	Ira Adler
18	Stephen Gelband
18	Bob Peavy
15	Mary Rolston
14	Mark Segal
14	Paul Taylor
12	Judy Burr
12	James Hammack
12	Kent Mason
10	Art Hyder
9	Frank Herzog
8	Allen Melser
6	Bruce Davis
6	Janet Myder Hammack
6	Dawn Sikkema

Novice Electronic

45	Stuart Glickman
35	Lori Ducharme
32	Ying Huang
27	Cynthia Hunter
26	Cheryl Naulty
22	Louise Roy
22	Dawn Sikkema
21	Martha Cain-Grady
20	John Barnes
16	Nancy Brun
15	John Pan
14	Jitesh Batra
12	Sharyn Greberman
9	Art Hyder
6	Ira Adler
6	Ken Goldman
6	Judy Manesh
6	Allen Melser
6	Eric Schweitzer
6	Steven Silverman

Advanced Electronic

85	José Cartas
28	Alex Hoffmaister
26	Judy Burr
25	Melissa Clark
23	Chris Hanessian
22	Evelyn Jacob
18	Willem Bier
15	Paul Taylor
12	Alex Guo
10	Janet Myder Hammack
6	Bruce Davis
6	Barbara DeLouise
6	Frank Herzog
6	Don Martell
6	Mark Segal
6	Rebecca Tidman



"I really believe there are things nobody would see if I didn't photograph them."

Diane Arbus

Focus on NBCC Members

A few months ago, while volunteering at the National Airport, **Jean Yuan** browsed through the *Washington Flyer Magazine* and saw a notice of a travel photog-

raphy competition. She decided to give it a try with this photo taken on a tour in Guilin, China. The scene was part of a show and she captured it with her Nikon D200 and an 18-200mm lens. She was thrilled to know that she got the first prize with her image.



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