

The New f-STOP

Quarterly Newsletter of the
Arkansas Outdoor
Photographers Club

APRIL 2020



AOPC Meetings:

The 3rd Thursday of the
month, 6:30pm, Room 65

at

2nd Presbyterian Church

600 Pleasant Valley Dr.

Little Rock, AR

**DUE TO THE
COVID-19 VIRUS,
AOPC MEETINGS
AND FIELD TRIPS
ARE CURRENTLY
SUSPENDED**

The President's Message

by

Cindy Dawson

The Arkansas Outdoor Photographers' Club has suspended its meetings during the coronavirus outbreak in which we find ourselves. In the meantime, we have put together a newsletter for you. We have a substantial membership, since AOPC has been around and has grown for several years. In fact, we have been around long enough that some current members and others might find it interesting to know more about our organization's beginning and history. We will devote a goodly portion of our next newsletter to a retrospective of the club, its beginnings and activities. If you have anything to contribute to that project – information or photos, please send them to me or one of your other club officers. In this issue, we include a profile of one of our newest members, long-time photojournalist Jerry McCullough, who, along with his wife Dianna, joined last December, and who gave us a fascinating presentation at our January meeting.

Having a little more time around the house than I had anticipated, I have run across some resources related to photography not previously known to me (yes, there are a lot of such things, you may already have been there, but hey, I'm learning). In a lucky stroke of good timing, given Jerry McCullough's mention of Dorothea Lange as an influence on his work, the Museum of Modern Art now has on its website, www.moma.org, 122 works from Lange that can be viewed (free). It also states that their exhibit "Dorothea Lange: Words & Pictures" will be opening online April 30, 2020 and it will be the first major MoMA exhibition of her work in 50 years, bringing iconic photos together with some lesser-known of her photos from early street photography to criminal justice reform projects. The same museum website has a retrospective of the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, who it describes as "one of the most original, accomplished, influential and beloved figures in the history of photography." He helped establish photojournalism as an art form. That MoMA exhibit—"Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century", held in 2010, surveys his entire career and his amazing ability to capture life humanely and on the run.

While our travel is currently limited, our access to other wonderful collections is not. The Smithsonian Institution offers wonderful access to its enormous collections and wide-ranging exhibits. It features a podcast on bird-spotting and what each of us can do to help bring birds back. It also has a section on "camera traps" to see wildlife and help science. I found the past exhibit "My Iran: Six Women Photographers" of interest, given that I have never been to Iran and am not too likely to go there anytime soon, plus, I'm curious. There is a fabulous amount of great content on the website, something to match everyone's interests. The Smithsonian is the largest museum, research and education complex in the world and it has collected materials, including photographs, from different eras and regions. It is a wonderful resource for exploring, learning and entertainment. The website is www.si.edu and Smithsonian Open Access allows download, share, and re-use of nearly 3 million items from its vast collections, free of charge.

The National Public Radio website, www.npr.org, caught my attention for a photo essay, "A Photographer's Guide to 'Slow Seeing' the Beauty in Everyday Nature" by photographer Janel Lynch. I suppose this is as good a time as any for "slow seeing" nature and for photography in general.

A brand-new release from The Great Courses, put out by the Teaching Company, is "Adobe Lightroom Classic CC: The Complete Guide." Software instructor Ben Willmore, a member of the Photoshop Hall of Fame, teaches it in 20 50-minute lectures/lessons and it is advertised as being designed for Lightroom users at all levels. The Great Courses also has Willmore's course on "Adobe Photoshop CC: The Complete Guide." See www.TheGreatCourses.com for additional information. There is a sale on both DVD courses until April 23, 2020, but all Great Courses go on sale often enough to avoid paying full price. I have not seen either one, but there are reviews on the website, positive and negative, so you can have more of an idea if this sort of thing might be for you. My family does have other photo courses from The Great Courses, though – "Fundamentals of Photography" (24 lectures from Joel Sartore, contributor to National Geographic) and "Masters of Photography" (24 lectures from 12 legendary National Geographic Masters), which we can recommend.

However you spend these days, be safe and we will look forward to eventually seeing the photos you have been able to take in the meantime.

In each issue, we plan to present a current AOPC member in an in-depth article. If you are interested in being featured in High Profile, please let one of the AOPC board members know. We also expect to have a Member Showcase, featuring a series of photos from that member. If you have photos to share for it, please let us know.

HIGH PROFILE: JERRY McCULLOUGH

Jerry McCullough feels lucky to have had a mentor who helped him get a start in photography and to have known other people in the field who influenced him in his long career as a photojournalist. “Photojournalist” wasn’t even a term in use when Jerry first started his photographic journey in Janesville, Wisconsin at age 14. His mentor, a news photographer at the Janesville Gazette who first encountered Jerry when he was at a pool hall skipping school, encouraged Jerry to stay in school but nevertheless found him a job outside of school hours at his newspaper. Jerry started by cleaning the darkroom. He also learned how to develop film and to print photos taken by the two news photographers at the Gazette.

At age 15, Jerry was given his first photo assignment – to photograph all the churches in Janesville for the paper’s big new year edition. Not old enough to drive, he took the bus and completed the assignment, using a 4 X 5 format Speed Graphic owned by the Gazette. Subsequently, Jerry got assignments to photograph club officers and various speakers at evening meetings. Once Jerry got his driver’s license, he started working nearly full-time for the paper while continuing his school work.

After high school, Jerry wanted to travel. He worked in New Orleans at a Court of Two Sisters photo finishing place and did some road construction and factory work elsewhere. At 19, he took a one-way \$99 flight from San Francisco to Hawaii, landing with only \$38 in his pocket. He slept on the beach for three nights until he got a job at a photo finishing shop and later he got a job photographing luaus.

In his early 20’s, Jerry went back to news photography and over the next several decades, he worked for several different newspapers across the country. Several of his photos were picked up by other newspapers and published widely in the U.S. Jerry’s assignments included three at White House events and he photographed presidents and presidential campaigns, all those between Kennedy and Clinton, on other occasions. Along the way, Jerry wrote a textbook along with Arthur Bleich, published in 1979 – [The Photojournalist’s Guide: Keep the Sun at Your Back](#). It was used for years in college photography classes across the U.S. Jerry regrets that he was never able (because of lack of finances) to go to college, but at least his text book was there. He has seen much of the U.S., having been in all the states but Alaska.

Understandably, after years of taking news photos, Jerry got burned out on them—there were just “too many horrible things to see,” so he began exclusively specializing in taking feature photographs. Jerry explains that a feature photo is a photo of what people do when they are not making news. Jerry admired the Great Depression photographs of Dorothea Lange and wanted to be like her. He was also influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson, who coined the term “decisive moment.” Jerry sought, and seeks, to capture just the right photographic moment, like the precise moment a child is suspended jumping over a puddle.

Jerry has always wanted to capture something that has meaning, that elicits emotion, something that other people may not notice, something that “makes” the photo. Without a doubt, he has succeeded. His photos have meaning, being the kind of photos that linger in your mind after seeing them, and his work has been recognized with several significant awards. He received his first award in 1962 – first place from the Inland Daily Press Association. He also won several Associated Press contest awards and those of different newspaper associations. Jerry was considered the top news photographer in New Mexico the two years in a row he was working for the Albuquerque Journal. While working in the southwest, Jerry often photographed life on Indian reservations, life that is rarely seen by outsiders, but he gained the trust of his subjects.

When Jerry worked for the Rockford, Illinois Register-Star, one photo he took at an evening neo-Nazi rally in 1979 in a Rockford city park was nominated for a Pulitzer prize. The paper’s editor, not wanting to give publicity to such people and their cause, adamantly said they wouldn’t publish any photo of it and that if Jerry still insisted on going, “Clock out. Not on our dime.” Seeing Jerry’s photo, though, changed the

editor's mind. Jerry admits it was a scary situation being at the rally. His photo is of a neo-Nazi standing up and speaking. His face and most of his body are blocked out by the American flag that was posted standing to the side; the light fell on the flag. There was no publicity for the neo-Nazi, yet the event was covered and the photo made a strong First Amendment statement.



Jerry's best day in photojournalism was one he spent with a person he admired, comedian Red Skelton, when Jerry worked for the Rochester, Minnesota paper and Skelton was in town being treated at the Mayo Clinic. Jerry was the photo editor and saw that the assigned photographer's photos of Skelton were fuzzy. Jerry contacted Skelton, who invited Jerry to have breakfast with him the next morning while substitute photos were taken. They got on well, and that led to lunch together and a tour around the newspaper offices. The presses stopped when all the staff was treated to a hilarious private show. In the attached photo, Skelton is holding a photo Jerry had taken of him, which Skelton intended to use to make a painting. Jerry notes that Skelton, in addition to being a comedian and entertainer, was also a very good painter.

Jerry states he has never in his life taken a perfect photo. This statement is hard to believe after seeing a number of his photos. But, he says, he is good in the darkroom and at Photoshop, noting that the rule for photojournalists is that you cannot do anything in Photoshop that you could not do in the darkroom, meaning to crop, dodge and burn, and diffuse. Jerry calibrates his screen every two weeks. For printing photos, he says that White House Custom Color in Minneapolis is the best. Jerry usually shoots in JPEG and has mostly preferred using Nikon equipment. His main camera now is a Nikon 3500, usually with a 50–80 mm or 80–200 mm lens. Whatever you use, remember to always take your camera with you, he advises. Jerry learned to make himself “a human tripod,” standing at a 45 degree angle as if using a rifle, elbows in, one leg in front of the other, so that he could take photos down to 1/15th of a second. As for what, as a photojournalist, was his favorite piece of photo-related gear, it would be a hand puppet, preferably with a



Jerry McCullough with Red Skelton

squeaker. Jerry found it invaluable in working around children especially, and he even used it when he photographed weddings. He and his wife Dianna had a photography studio for 23 years after the Arkansas Gazette folded (he was their photo editor) and after a stint as a factory rep. He and Dianna would photograph at least one and as many as four weddings in a weekend. Dianna was an equal partner in the studio and became a very good photographer in her own right. Jerry's portrait of her is shown below. Jerry and Dianna retired from the studio 12 years ago but now take photos for pleasure.



Jerry and Dianna raised three kids, but Jerry has also spent years mentoring other young people. Having benefitted enormously from having selfless mentors along his career, he takes satisfaction out of helping guide budding photographers into the field, most recently helping one to grow in knowledge and get an assignment with National Geographic. He encourages other photographers to get involved in mentoring. In his mentoring work, Jerry advises to be honest with people, to approach them as potential subjects in the right way so that they can be themselves, ignoring the person behind the camera, thus allowing a photo to be taken that can speak volumes.

-Cindy Dawson

“Bad as it is, the world is potentially full of good photographs. But to be good, photographs have to be full of the world.” – Dorothea Lange

Vertical Landscape Photography

By

Bobby Burton

If you are like me, then you instinctively place your wide-angle lens onto your camera body and shoot everything in “landscape” orientation. I did this for years, but I cannot tell you why. I have tried to answer that question for my satisfaction for a while with no success. There are a few things that vertical shooting can help you with in the field.

One of the challenges with wide-angle lenses is taking a photo that does not have empty space. Aside from minimalistic shots where space adds to the picture, dead space in landscape photography typically serves no purpose. When I look through my photos and come across dead space, I usually find that I did not work hard enough on the composition.

Dead spaces are areas that do not add to the image. Worse case is that space can take away from the subject at times. So how can you avoid dead space? Vertical compositions are one method.

Vertical compositions often can tighten up your scene for you. Slot canyons are a great example of a scene that begs for a vertical photo. Capturing the height of most canyons helps make the picture have more depth. Waterfalls can also benefit from shooting vertically. Included is a shot I took last year that had nothing exciting to the left or right when I tried to create a horizontal composition. I finally rotated my camera, and it allowed me to isolate the subject better. I also was able to utilize the drainage as a leading line into the main area.



Vertical shots can help you bring out a singular object more. For instance, in the photo included, the waterfall appears larger vertically than horizontally. Part of this is understanding that a wide-angle lens has a natural warp on the outside of the lens. You gain more with the effect shooting vertically than when shooting horizontally. Shooting horizontally tends to pancake your image. A mountain, for instance, might seem smaller in your photo than it is in person.

One last thing that shooting vertically helps with is panoramic photos. One common mistake beginners make when learning how to take a panoramic shot is shooting horizontally. When they get home and stitch their image together, they will find that they might have to crop out some of their image, and the result will be a long image that is not very tall. An easy way to fix this is to shoot vertically and capture more of a scene. In doing so, you will find that your prints will still be wide, but they will also be taller.

MEMBER SHOWCASE:

Ron Russ









Upcoming Events:



See more information at www.bedfords.com



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