



# The f/Stop

Enchanted Lens Camera Club



November, 2007

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

Volume 47 Number 3



**Club Meeting:** 7:00pm @ Fellowship Hall, Immanuel Presbyterian Church

**Speaker November 1: Doug Brown**

**Judge November 15: Larry Wright**

**Speaker November 29: To Be Determined**

**Workshops:** SEE DETAILS Under Mentorship Committee Report

## *President's Message*

Sometimes a picture says it all, Happy snapping! Jack

### **Attention! Aviso!**

Date change from the normal schedule

The first December meeting date is changed due to availability of the church and special events in Nob Hill area for Christmas. Mentorship program and the meeting will be held on

**November 29, 2007**

**Published Version**

**October 29, 2007 5:30 pm**

## November 1 Speaker: Douglas Brown

The Festival of the Cranes (November 13-18, 2007) is hosted annually by the City of Socorro and the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (BDA). Several of our members participate in the success of this festival. In preparation for The Festival of the Cranes and our upcoming field trip to Bosque del Apache, Doug Brown will be giving his contribution to one of the fee-based BDA workshops on photography. Come to the ELCC meeting and enjoy his complementary presentation to our group.

At BDA, the Fly-Out in the morning and the Fly-In in the evening are memorable events. Doug will concentrate on bird photography using exceptional optics. Creating interesting bird images presents a formidable challenge even for seasoned professionals. Doug's name seems to appear each month as a ribbon winner during the club's judging competition. Hopefully, he will share some of his tips and techniques.



## November Judge: Larry Wright

As a kid growing up in the Midwest he became interested in taking and developing black & white photos with his friends. After college and getting his first SLR camera he specialized in outdoor and wildlife photography. A resident of Albuquerque for over thirty years, Larry has taught “Photographic Composition” at University of New Mexico Continuing Education for the last twenty years. His class emphasizes photographic seeing – better seeing the world to make photos with more impact.

Larry thinks that our eyes become numb to the interesting, everyday sights to the point that we often feel we must travel to take beautiful photographs, just because we don’t see clearly what’s all around us right here in New Mexico. One of his approaches centers on finding & emphasizing the visually interesting qualities hidden in everyday objects. So try one of his exercises for yourself: photograph objects that look like the letters in your name. For example, you might photograph the end of a swing set for the letter “A”. The idea is to develop your ability to see what you normally overlook.

*“Get down like a dog with your subject!”*



Image from Internet by Chantal of Larry’s dog in Open Space

## November Assigned: Patterns-- Natural or Not!

Finding patterns and symmetry for your shot need not constrain you. Patterns of all kinds occur at all scales throughout nature, but also throughout human constructs, too. When at a scene, always look up.. and down .. and all around for a pattern. In the October 2007 f/stop, I requested ideas about patterns. Here are my three favorite responses:

- Mirroring -- A repeated shape that is carried through an image can create a strong visual theme. Or, it’s can all be done with smoke and mirrors. Reflections involving several reflective surfaces interacting together can produce distorted and complex patterns where reality and reflection become intertwined.
- Juxtaposition -- Juxtaposition is the act of placing two things alongside each other, usually in order to create a comparison or contrast. For example, a physical juxtaposition of a pattern of light objects with one strong dark object, a pattern of rigid line objects with one smooth contrast. Or, a philosophical juxtaposition of a church to signify a place of peace and a background of violence.
- Grouping -- A natural inclination to group images to form bigger patterns. Patterns of stability and/or change become clear when one is able to track time. We cannot “see” flowers grow but the pattern can be revealed by time lapse photography. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words.



## November Mentorship Program

TIME: 6:15 to 6:45 pm (Reservation not required, Drop-in Welcome)

PLACE: Immanuel Parlor, Immanuel Presbyterian Church (the upstairs room)

### **November 1:** Jerry Goffe -- Photographing at Bosque del Apache (BDA)

In preparation for The Festival of the Cranes and our upcoming field trip to Bosque del Apache, Jerry will give you insight into the “How, When and Where” of photographing at this location. As V.P. of the Friends of Bosque del Apache, Jerry Goffe can offer numerous suggestions on how to obtain the best images during your visit. The old saying “Location, location, location” still applies. After hearing his presentation you will want to visit BDA for more than a one day field trip.

### **November 15:** Dana Foy -- Long exposure, night photography

In keeping with our effort to encourage members to participate in the assigned subjects of our competition, Dana Foy will provide his insight into the techniques related to long exposures. Dana is an expert in night photography and also is the coordinator of the State Fair Photography Contest. Dana will be our judge for the January club competition when the assigned topic is Long exposure.

### **November 29:** David Powell -- Light, it's the quality not the quantity

At this meeting, we will be exploring the quality of light vs the quantity. How to improve the quality of your images by controlling the quality of light. In addition to “shoot early and late” David Powell will show you other methods to achieve similar results.

## December Mentorship Program

TIME: 6:15 to 6:45 pm (Reservation not required, Drop-in Welcome)

PLACE: Immanuel Parlor, Immanuel Presbyterian Church  
(Traditionally known by club members as the upstairs room)

### **December 20:** Gary Rasmussen -- Landscape and Christmas Photography

Professional photographer, Gary Rasmussen, will help you improve your landscape photography just in time for the Christmas holidays.(lights in old town and all that) Gary is a local photographer who has been published in numerous magazines and calendars. He specializes in images of the southwest.

### Small classes still forming!

Contact David Powell or Rhonda Fleming especially if you want to host an educational topic.

The mentorship committee is willing to help with some of the logistics of getting started.



## Special Project Forming Now!

**Title: Open Space Gallery Show and More**

**Date:** Kick-off meeting: November 1, 2007

**Time:** 6:15 to 6:45 pm (continuing before each meeting each month for entire club year)

**Location:** Immanuel Parent's Room, Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Small upstairs room at church: Follow the signs as you enter the door. Maps will be posted

**Sign-up Requirements:** Reservation not required, requesting repeat participation

**Organizer:** Arthurine Pierson

**Details:** Albuquerque Open Space Locations -- <http://www.cabq.gov/openspace>

Albuquerque Open Space Program is unique in many ways. With a total of 27 different areas in the program, a wide range of photographic activities are possible. The ELCC group will work with the new director (Jodi Hedderig) and space coordinator (Joshua Willis) of the Open Space Visitor Center to provide ... To be determined by the group (gallery show, web slide show, calendar, coffee table book, note cards, newsletter articles, speaker presentation ...). The functionality will progress through the year depending on your input. Initially, the ELCC will organize a **Gallery Event to be scheduled at the Visitor Center**. Imagine 200+ photographers documenting this unique Albuquerque asset.

## Why participate in the Open Space Project?

At each session prior to the ELCC meeting, a projector will be set up to review Open Space images submitted by ELCC club members. Start submitting images now! You need not be present to submit images.

The focus will be on Art Talk in each session:

- learning guidelines for non-competitive discussion/critique of the images.
- learning software techniques (mostly Photoshop) to improve image-by-image based on critique discussions. For example, instead of talking about cropping, level adjustments, burn or dodging areas, etc., we will duplicate the image live and try different ideas.
- learning resolution techniques to make high quality gallery images (matrix panorama building) to low resolution for a web-based GPS photo map of open space images or images for newspaper and newsletter publications.
- learning will be focused on composition techniques (opposed to camera fundamentals) of nature photography.

**For more information, ask Arthurine Pierson, e-mail to [Arthurine.Pierson@gmail.com](mailto:Arthurine.Pierson@gmail.com) or respond to the "I'm interested" to be posted on Yahoo mailing list.**

## Vote NOW! 2008-2009 Assigned Categories

It's that time of year again to decide the categories for 2008-2009 assigned judging competition. The voting is now open for next year's assigned competition categories. The nominations are listed below. Three methods to vote have been provided to encourage wide spread participation. In all methods, please vote for your **9 favorites** which will be used for the 9 months the ELCC meets each year.

**Method I:** With the growth in membership (200+) and ELCC's emphasis on going electronic for club information, we highly encourage using the Electronic group poll. If you haven't already, please click on the dashed area to be hyper linked to vote. Click on the check boxes next to your choices. *More details will be given at the November IELCC meeting.*

VOTE HERE

**Method II:** If you are unable to access the web page on your own, volunteers will be on-line at the all November meetings to help you access the electronic poll.

**Method III:** Print off the paper ballot below. Fill it out and turn it in at the membership desk during a November meeting. This may be simpler for those that are not as electronic savvy yet. However, remember this method requires more work for the volunteers tallying the count. Also, the electronic method has last year's results which is a nice feature.

Voting Opens: *November 1, 2007*

Voting Closes: *November 30, 2007*

## 2008-2009 Assigned Categories Paper Ballot

1.  Close Up
2.  This Old House
3.  Outdoor Art Around Albuquerque
4.  The Color Purple
5.  Still Life
6.  Local fairs or festivals
7.  Black and White photography
8.  The old church in Golden
9.  Postcard from New Mexico
10.  Abstract
11.  Street Candid
12.  Zoo Animals
13.  Aviation
14.  Nude
15.  Textures
16.  Clouds and Mountains
17.  Architecture/Perspective
18.  Sharp

Please mark 9  
choices with an  
"X" in the red  
square

Ballot submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name is required to verify that you have not  
voted both on-line and by paper ballot.



### From the Editor, Arthurine

The theme of this issue is assigned topics. I apologize if the global warming image offends anyone, but I think it makes a point about the assigned topics. This month's category: *Patterns, Natural or Not* can clearly be interpreted

numerous ways. Patterns of change was the farthest from my mind when thinking about my entry in this month's judging competition. Keeping an open mind, the "global warming" image could even be entered next month in *A Sense of Humor, photos that promote a nice chuckle or smile*.

The image on the cover is a composition by me. As editor, ELCC gives me some freedom to select the images for the f/stop. The cover image was selected to emphasis the assigned topics flexibility. For example, I could possibly enter the image into November's category *patterns*. The Canada Goose flight pattern is, for some, the symbol of fall arriving. The V-formation pattern of the Canada Goose, honking as they cross the sky every spring and fall in North America, is a real symbol of the wild (October's category *Nature, No visible hand*

*of man*). Or, maybe into the February's category *Reflections* since the sunset reflects into the water. However, in this case, the geese shadows are computer-generated which is clearly prohibited in the ELCC bylaws. So if I remove the geese shadows to make it composed of only photographs, I might consider March's category: *Multiple Images*. The background image was taken at Bosque del Apache. The flying geese were taken over the skies of Chama, New Mexico. The composition was done in Adobe's Photoshop.

Now, take this one image and think about next year's categories. If I wanted to enter this image into the judging, I would possibly vote for the categories: *Local Fairs and Festivals, Postcard from New Mexico, Aviation, and / or Clouds and Mountains*. I'm not lobbying for these categories, I just trying to get everyone to think about the diversity of interpretations.

I am lobbying for you to vote and participate more in the assigned categories. How about April's category *Motion*? You might consider images of the off-road vehicles at Montessa Park, just one of the many Open Space locations.

**It's your club, make the most of it.  
Have fun and improve your photography!**

## Competition Results



Dashed lines (electronic version only) indicate a hyper-link to the ELCC web site for slide show galleries.

The f/Stop has traditionally been a source to advertise the competition results. Technology is changing rapidly. It is no longer cost prohibitive (in electronic form) to provide members access to view full-color images of the winners in each category. Check out the on-line gallery!

Assigned Photo Categories 2007-2008		
Month	Assigned Category	Judge
Nov 15, 2007	Patterns, natural or not	Larry Wright
Dec 20, 2007	A Sense of Humor, photos that promote a nice chuckle or smile	Julie & Carl Jamison
Jan 17, 2008	Long Exposure	Dana Foy
Feb 21, 2008	Reflections	Toni Beatty
Mar 20, 2008	Multiple Exposures - interpret as desired	Marie Leslie
April 17, 2008	Motion	Phyllis Crossley
May 15, 2008	Diffused Images	Andrew Neighbour



# Field Trips



Dashed lines (electronic version only) indicate a hyper-link to the ELCC web site calendar that will give you the latest information about field trips.

## FIELD TRIPS 2007 / 2008

September 29<sup>th</sup> ..... **Bandelier National Monument**  
 October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> ..... **Bisti Badlands**  
 November ..... **Open**

December 1<sup>st</sup> ..... **Bosque Del Apache**  
 January 2008 ..... **To Be Announced**  
 February 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> ..... **White Sands**  
 March ..... **Valle Caldera Wildlife (proposed)**  
 April ..... **Gathering of Nations Pow Wow**  
 May 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> ..... **Canyon De Chelly / Monument Valley**

Information about the Bosque Del Apache trip and a sign-up sheet will be available on the membership desk at the November meetings. For those who are planning to go on the Canyon De Chelly/Monument valley trip in May 2008, a sign-up sheet will also be available. Please sign-up early so we can plan group reservations.

## Other Announcements



**Congratulations Joe Campbell for being selected as the Albuquerque Journal's "Picture of the Day" On 12 October 2007.**

Know of an interesting photography contest. Consider advertising it on the ELCC mailing list. If you enter and win, let us announce your award in the f/Stop.

# Competition Results

## October 2007 Judge: David Cramer

<b>Black and White Print: Open</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	White Sands Evening	Tom Jasek	14

<b>Color Print B: Assigned</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	Ventana Trail	Jim Arnold	12
2	Handsome Little Devil	John Palmer	12
3	Two Steps Back	Jim Arnold	10
HM	Orange Dragonfly	Bettie Jo Barton	9
HM	Claret Cup	Kathy Deal	9
HM	Red Rocks near Cochiti Pueblo, NM	Sarah Holcomb	9

<b>Color Print B: Open</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	Down on the Farm	John Palmer	13
2	And...They're Off!	John Palmer	12
3T	Colorado Giants	Stan Kravitz	10
3T	Painted Desert Rock	Stan Kravitz	10

<b>Color Print A: Assigned</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	Letting Some Steam Off	Harriet Oyler	13
2T	I Miss My Green Head	Jack Houser	12
2T	Pac-Man	Harriet Oyler	12
3T	Plaza Blanca (Re-entry)	Norm Orchant	10
3T	From the South Rim	Norm Orchant	10
HM	My Afternoon at Zion	Ruth Apodaca	9

<b>Color Print A: Open</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	486 Pulls Out on Sunday Morning	Bob Barton	12
2T	Amber Alert	Eric Jones	11
2T	Winter Blues	Eric Jones	11
2T	Harley	Pat O' Brien	11
2T	A Spring Morning	John Tissler	11

<b>Slides: Open</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	Personal Touch VII (Seven)	Hilde Bommhardt-Hundt	14
2	My Last Lilies	Hilde Bommhardt-Hundt	11
3T	Lion's Tail and Shadow - Carlsbad	Art Bova	10
3T	A New Approach XX (Twenty)	Hilde Bommhardt-Hundt	10

<b>Digital B: Assigned</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1T	Sun-Kissed	Richard Nunez	14
1T	Thorn Light	Bill d'Ellis	14
2T	A New Beginning	Leslie Davis	13
2T	Mesa Verde	Ken Schenck	13
2T	Betty Davis Eyes	Richard H. Davis	13
2T	Lichen or Map	Bill d'Ellis	13
HM	Weathered Sentinel	Bill d'Ellis	12
HM	Blue Dragon	Lynda Paladin	12
HM	Tsaya (Say-Yah)	Richard Nunez	12

<b>Digital B: Open</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	Teton Morning	Leslie Davis	14
2T	Blue Strings	Stephan Kolb	13
2T	Santa Fe in Fall Splendor	Terri Cox	13
2T	Safe with Daddy	Leslie Davis	13
HM	Next Stop, Men's Room	Stephan Kolb	12
HM	The Dish	Pamela Germain Martinez	12
HM	Roof-top Access	Richard H. Davis	12
HM	Balloon-Zoom Vegas	Richard Cullison	12

<b>Digital A: Assigned</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1T	Dragonfly and Lily	Don Bartram	13
1T	Broken Tail	Pat O'Brien	13
2T	Feeder Guard	David Powell	12
2T	Damaged	Tom Kilroy	12
HM	Yummie	Tom Kilroy	11
HM	Staredown	Rance Edmunds	11
HM	Lizuli Bunting	David Powell	11
HM	Lily and Friend	Don Bartram	11
HM	Supper in Silk	Douglas Brown	11

<b>Digital A: Open</b>			
<i>Place</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	Oropendola, After the Rain	Douglas Brown	13
2	Look Over Here and Smile	Tye Hardison	13
HM	Sea Grass in Storm	Jack Houser	12
HM	Man Working 2533	Carolyn Collis	12
HM	Bottom Side Up	David Powell	12
HM	Riparian Garden	Denise Carlson	12
HM	Toki's Bridge	Denise Carlson	12
HM	Staredown	Douglas Brown	12

## Article Submission Attachment



### From the Editor Again, Arthurine

The f/stop is your newsletter. Contributions are welcome. Next month's assigned topic is *A Sense of Humor, photos that promote a nice chuckle or smile*. Let's make the f/stop

fun to read and submit some of your holiday humor.

This month: Thanks Darrel for your electronic savvy to get the voting polls established. Darrel, also, contributed this article to add some insight in the power of electronic mailing list for polling other types of opinions.

I submitted an article that touches many topics that will be presented in the ELCC this month. First, I am organizing a special project for Open Space which with an emphasis on Art Talk. So I included an art talk article addressing one of the most basic guidelines

in photography: The Rule of Thirds. Secondly, the judge for November emphasizes the "art of seeing" in his University of New Mexico Continuing Education's photography classes. I wondered why the "Rule of Thirds" works in photography and influences our "seeing." The answer relates directly to human eye patterns. Yet another dimension to assigned category *Patterns*. Third, I seldom except guidelines without understanding the "how, when, and why." So I examine the comparison of the "rule of thirds" with visual perception patterns. I hope I presented this guideline from many dimensions for others.

And last but not least, I really enjoyed my trip to the Bosque del Apache last year! I happened to see on the observation deck the same day half a dozen club members that helped me immensely with tips and techniques. The ELCC is great forum for improving your photography! Please share!

## Using the ELCC's Yahoo e-mail List! by Darrel Patterson<sup>1</sup>

Have you ever been in a meeting with a large group trying to discuss a topic with people standing up and expressing their opinion, sometimes making mini-speeches, or 2 or 3 people end up with a running debate? Meanwhile most are glancing at their watches wondering when this will end.

Groups do need to gather opinions and ideas from members and make decisions. In the past, getting everyone together and hashing things out was the only way. Today, with a very high percent of people with e-mail access, group members can "meet" virtually and discuss topics everyday.

Our "Yahoo group" is our email connection for gathering input and discussing ideas. I believe that the club will evolve and grow best if it receives regular input on the member's desires and interests. What did you like or dislike about the last speaker? What type of feedback from the judges helps you the most? We're all here to improve our photography skills, it's likely that the area you want to improve, someone else also wants to learn. By voicing your wants, ideas and suggestions in a forum like the Yahoo group, the club is better able to serve its members.

I realize that the main weakness of the Yahoo group is that it doesn't reach 100% of the membership. However, more people receive e-mail from the group than attend meetings! And a reminder, if you read a message that you strongly disagree with, you may be tempted to dash-off a strongly worded reply. It's often best to wait and consider your reply before hitting that send button. Imagine that you are actually speaking to that person in real life.

**To send a message to the group, just address your email to: [elcc-abq@yahoogroups.com](mailto:elcc-abq@yahoogroups.com)**

<sup>1</sup>Disclaimer: Please consider this an opinion piece and not in any way ELCC policy.

# Art Talk

by Arthurine

Why do our friends look at our vacation snapshots so fast? They are looking, but they are not seeing. What's going on? With the examples in this digest, we try on purpose to understand their selective attentiveness to our "prize" photos. How do our minds function when constructing images from a photograph?

Would it be possible to apply scientific or aesthetic ideas to produce images that are visually salient (definition having a quality that thrusts itself into attention)? For many years, vision researchers have been investigating how the human visual system analyses an image. An important, not surprising, initial result is that human vision does not "see" images like the relatively consistent result of the

camera. The goal of human vision is not to create a replica of the seen world in our heads. What we "see" when looking at a photograph depends as much on our current attention focus as it does on the array of light that enters our eyes.

On-going research has discovered a limited set of visual properties that are detected very rapidly and accurately by the human visual system. Also, no surprise, they are directly correlated to

## The Pattern: Selective Attention

the observable properties of matter: line, shape, space, texture, light and dark. These properties are called pre-attentive, since their detection seemed to precede or lead to focused selective attention. Pre-attentive focus is the ability for a human visual system to rapidly identify certain basic visual properties with speed and ease. If the low-level visual system can be harnessed during photography viewing, it can be used to draw attention

to areas of potential interest in the image. This cannot be accomplished in an ad-hoc fashion, however. The visual features must take advantage of

- the strengths of our visual system,
- the innate limits of our vision, and
- the monumental needs of the viewer.

Humans have developed an incredible ability to avoid over-stimulation by the complexities of modern life. When we drive a car our selective attention may be so focused on the road or on some problem in our mind, that we are unable to pay attention to the beauty of sunset. That's when I realized a sunset is the perfect content for images to demonstrate our selective attention in relationship to photography. Although the screening of sensations is a useful survival tool in our cluttered existence, we must learn to abandon it when looking at art. We all perceive sunsets differently. The sun's light is a magnificent feat of nature and a great subject to focus a discussion on learning "to see."

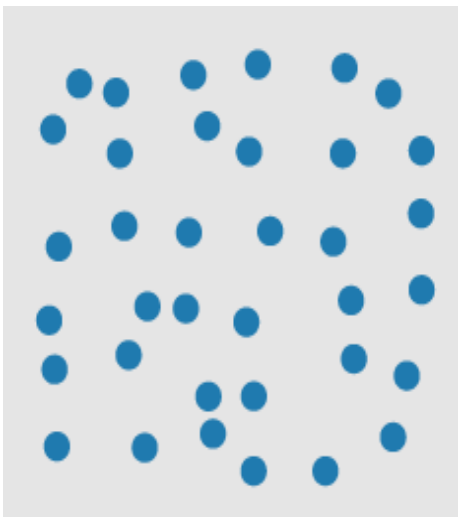


Figure A<sup>5</sup>

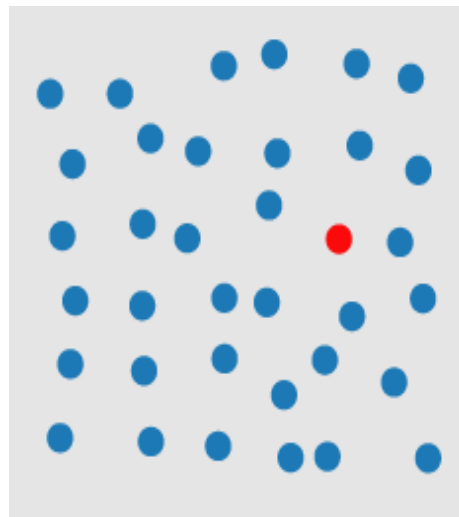


Figure B<sup>5</sup>

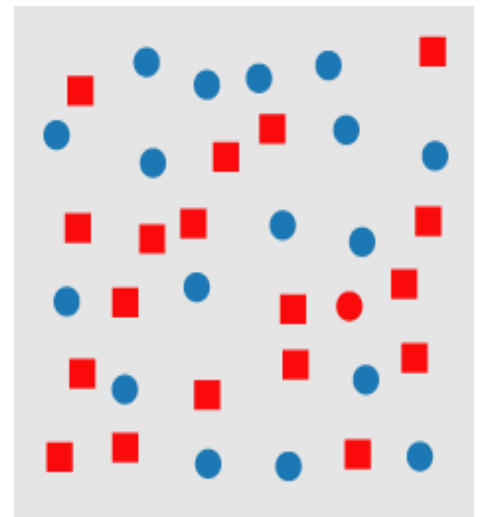


Figure C<sup>5</sup>

Can you tell in a glance if a target is present or not? How long did it take you? Humans are able to rapidly and accurately detect targets among other items called distractions. An example is the searching for a target (red circle): (Figure A) target is absent, (Figure B) red target (color difference) is present in blue circle distractions, and (Figure C) red target (shape difference) is present in the blue circle and square distractions. A viewer can tell at a glance whether the target is present or absent. This ability is called selective attention and seems to precede focused attention. A photographer can use human pattern recognition and other human phenomenon to guide the viewer's eye into their image and gradually lead their eye to explore the image. This processing asks in part "What visual properties draw our eyes, and therefore our focus of attention to a particular object in a scene?" The answer would be very helpful in photographic composition.

<sup>5</sup>Healey, C., "Perception in Visualization," *IJCAI 2001*, 371-376.

Starting with the blue sky at sundown and continuing until the last red rays of the sun, we are using the Canada Geese and brilliant sunsets to show examples of the ways an artist can direct our attention within photographs. Obviously, accuracy of size and shape relationships are important. The control of illumination helps. However, of all the principles that can be used to control our gaze, our eyes like to see whole images instead of parts. This concept of closure is a phenomenon of observing parts but

## **The Problem: Premature Closure**

perceiving the whole. Related to closure, it is the human's ability to screen out unnecessary stimuli. In other words, our eyes examine an image based on fairly common habits of visual perception. Other things being equal (which is usually not the case), our eyes are drawn to the center of a photograph.

The habit of reading from left to right, or top to bottom, or right to left may produce differences in the way we look at images. But everyone has binocular vision and perceptions of color, light, size, shape, texture, etc. Humans tend to be more uniform than diverse on the way we *see*. Because of perceptual uniformity, we can speak of design elements and principles as if it applies to everyone. Artists try to help us by organizing the parts of an image so they can be seen as a whole. A failure of this effort -- ineffective design -- results in the premature closure or termination of the viewer's experience. People

simply stop looking at your photograph. The act of "not looking" is considered a kind of closure, but not a good one.

The photographer, just like the painter, can design an image to guide the sequence in which visual parts are observed and the amount of attention they are paid. The goal is to have you linger in an image until you examine the whole image and obtain closure. Closure occurs after leading your eye into and then out of the image after examining all portions of the image. One technique (not recommended) is to put a dominant object in the center of the image. The dominant element is the one the others depend on for their visual value and their meaning. If you place it in the middle, the human looks in the center, obtains pre-mature closure, and is done.

*So exactly how can a photographer get a viewer to examine the whole image?* Selective attention can be achieved in numerous ways. We know that non-conformity stands out. The simpler and fewer distractions aid in a human detecting the exception. Similarity of any kind -- of shape, color, size, light, or texture -- promotes the impression of coherence. But similarity (yet another sunset) has its downside since sameness can lead to boredom. So to stop sameness, I added some Canada Geese exhibiting different behaviors like flying or landing. Variety satisfies our need for change, but not so much variety that the wholeness of an image is sacrificed. The real answer: It's still somewhat of a mystery.



## The Consequences: Change Blindness<sup>6</sup>



Change blindness is the phenomenon where a person viewing an image fails to detect large changes in the scene. Of course, each individual experiences a scene differently. The photographer has used numerous selective focus techniques to lead your eye into the image with the soldier in the foreground. The perceived line of soldiers that then takes your eye as they load the plane. There is a major difference between the two images. Can you detect it?

For the majority of us, our selective attention starts fresh with each image. Generally, details of an image cannot be remembered across separate scenes except in areas where viewers have previously focused their attention. The photographer strived to direct the eye, and therefore the mind, to areas of interest or importance within the visualization. Change blindness is considered to be higher for items that are less interesting (items in the background). Once you discover it, you realize that the difference was not a subtle one. Change blindness is not a failure to see because of limited visual acuity; rather, it is a failure based on inappropriate attention or premature closure. However, once attention has “latched onto” the object, the change is easy to see.

<sup>6</sup>Rensink RA (2002). Change Detection. Annual Review of *Psychology*,53:245-277.

*(Answer: The jet engine is removed in the very center of the image.)*



The simplest way for a photographer to direct the viewer's eye is in the strategically placing of the dominant object in the scene. Our eyes are usually drawn towards the center of any visual field. Centrally located objects are more likely to receive attention. Think of your typical school portrait. The head in most portraits is centered between left and right and slightly above the midpoint of a canvas. It corresponds to the location of the viewer's own head. Sometimes called the "static zone."

Humans have a deep need for balance or equilibrium. Balance can be seen in nature, in the human figure, and in buildings, we expect it in art as well as life. In art, balance is an optical condition: weight, tension, and stability take on perceptual meanings. In learning to walk, humans go through a period of instability. When we see an object, we remember that period and it makes us sensitive to every sign of imbalance.

The simplest way to achieve balance is with symmetry. It has spontaneous appeal which is probably due to the bilateral symmetry of the human body. Also, it requires a minimum of perceptual effort to understand. The elements in each half of an image may be very complex. As soon as they are recognized as reflections or mirror images of each other, the focused attention is curiously satisfied. When humans are so comfortable with an image, it is hard to get them to explore other parts. They stop looking.

Another approach is asymmetrical balance. It provides pleasure but it takes more effort or examination of an image to achieve. Humans look for symmetry in the center of the image. If they do not find it, the eyes start to wander around the image for something to focus their attention.

Human's pre-selective attention is especially influenced by how we organize the elements of design. For example, light is very important in our selective attention. The eye can not resist a place that seems to radiate light. For instance, when viewing sunsets, we are tempted to look at the bright sun even though we know it will hurt our eyes, Hence, a very light area will dominate its darker surroundings, much as the sun dominates the sky.

## The Aesthetics: Guided Gaze

Line is the versatile backbone design element for guiding gaze.

The predominant line of the sky is the horizon: the separation between sky and earth. Implied lines appear in the clouds. Color can also be used very effectively. Warm colors (yellow, orange, reds of a sunset) seem to advance towards us where cool colors (blue sky) recede into the background. The photographer trained in organizing these elements can effectively cause the viewer to linger longer within each photograph. Consciously or intuitively, most great photos use some way of guiding the viewer's gaze effectively.



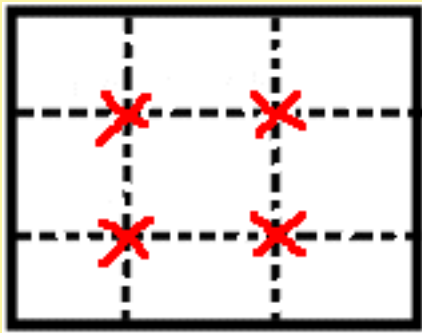
Composition guidelines are just that: guidelines. This horizon is almost dead center and relies on symmetry of the sky reflection. Every guideline can have a great reason for which to break it. Sunset is one of nature's most gorgeous spectacles. The colors of this twilight sunset are decidedly different especially with the countless hues of the sky reflected into the calm lake water. The message is calm.

This Bosque del Apache sunset image includes both the sky and the lake allowing freedom of creativity for multiple purposes. For example, with the horizon centered, there is room for a magazine text title on the upper sky. The intention of one photographer may be to sell the image. Another person may want to use the image as a reference photograph to paint their own meaningful expression of the vibrant sky or the lake reflection.

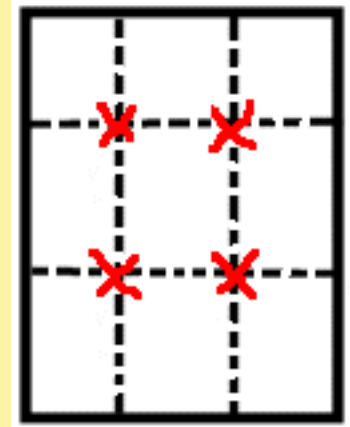
## The Guideline: Rule of Thirds

Even before studies of perception, artists intuitively have been using eye focusing techniques for centuries. Two thousand years ago when Pythagoras asked his students where a knot should be tied in a piece of string to make it look “aesthetic,” they decided it was about 1/3 of the way in -- off center. This latter became the “golden rule” ratio (1: 1.618) of an eye-pleasing image size. Most famous photographs or paintings in the world today have the mathematical “golden rule” applied to them in some way to keep our eye interested. This ratio was designed into 35 mm film so we are very comfortable with the proportions. A discussion of nature, Fibonacci numbers and nautilus shells would help explain more about the “ideal ratio.” To make the ratio a very simple heuristic for photographers to remember, an approximation called the “rule of thirds” is used (shown in the diagrams).

This discussion guideline states that the picture can be divided into three horizontal sections (i.e., a tic-tac-toe grid) and three vertical sections and therefore, where the horizontal and vertical lines intersect makes an ideal location for the more dominant parts of your picture. By locating



your main subject at one of the four intersections or power points you give the subject more emphasis. It makes the eye do a little work to find the object and the eye actually scans the rest of the photo looking for more detail. It makes a photo less boring, more dynamic (subjective, judgemental statement). In reality, we are so used to the rule of thirds, an image actually sliced in half seems disconcerting unless ... Exceptions can always be found.



This same sunset image is cropped two different ways using the “rule of thirds” for placing the horizon. Art that is devoted to more traditional compositional tendencies seeks to solidify into rigid “rules” of design/composition. A la “step one, step two ...” publications such as this one teach tips and techniques on succeeding every time. More importantly you want to add creativity design possibilities into your tool box so you know the reason for your choices. Although art is an “inexact science,” human nature seeks some form of quantitative measurement and judgement. The “rule of thirds” works.



In sports, the rules do not vary (hopefully) within one game or event. Art is completely different. Art encourages variety. There is really no one right answer and one right guideline. If you are too involved in following the guidelines step by step, you will forget about the spirit of an image. As we examine what works and what does not work, you can quickly multiply the number of elements by the number of principles of composition yielding an infinite number of possibilities. Infinity is really a strength in creating art. To me the value of creating art is to cultivate our minds and hearts in a world where the aesthetic guidelines vary dramatically; as dramatically as a sunset varies.

## The f/Stop is your club newsletter!

The f/stop is a monthly newsletter published by the Enchanted Lens Camera Club. The publication is made available electronically via the Internet.

*How to submit articles?* On the archival f/Stop page on the ELCC website, there is a submit button. Since the medium is electronic, there is little or no limitation on length. The main guidelines are to make sure there are no copyright violations and the articles are educational. No commercial advertisements.

*When is the deadline?* In order to have the newsletter available by the first meeting of the month, the deadline for submitting articles will be the last Thursday of the previous month. Of course, the earlier the submission the better.

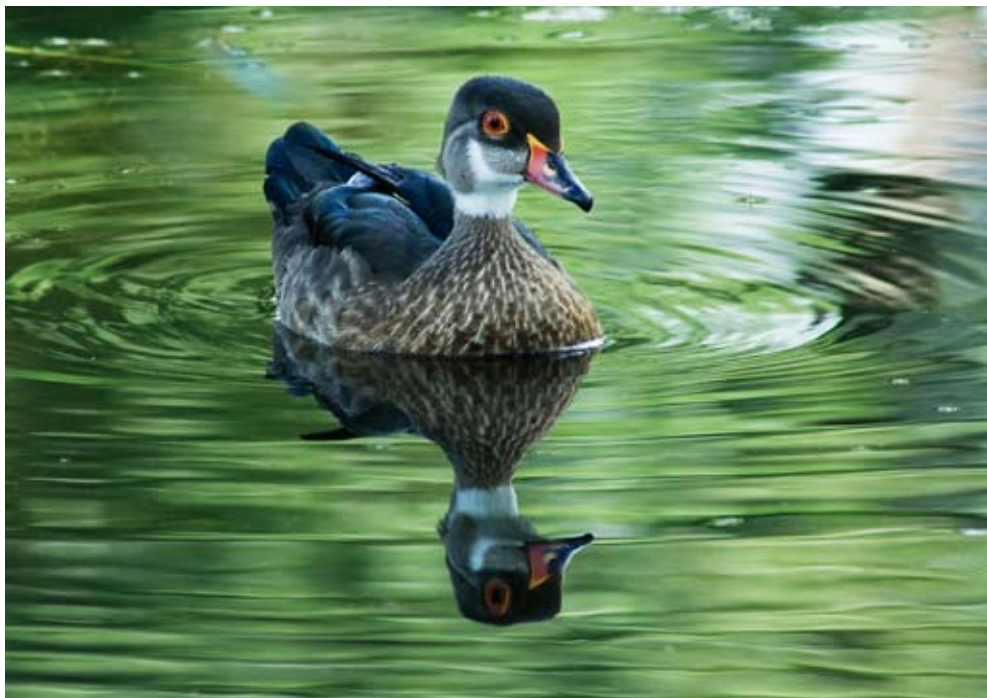
*What format do the articles need to be?* No real restrictions are in place. The f/Stop will be published using Adobe® InDesign which is very flexible in reading all data types. We will get back to you if we need any other information.

*May I submit photographs?* Attachments (again almost any format) are welcome especially color images. The printed version will still be in black and white. The on-line version will be in full 300 dpi color.

*Should I sign up for refreshments?* Oh, this has nothing to do with the newsletter. Since this frequently asked question section will be in every newsletter, I thought it would be nice to mention. The hospitality committee wants to keep the refreshment tradition going! Contact Kathy Richter-Sand to sign-up.

Disclaimer: The staff (sounds official, huh?) of the f/Stop has no obligations to use any photo or text submitted although we will make every effort to publish member contributions on a timely and professional manner. We do highly solicit input from the members.

## See you at Bosque del Apache!!



I Miss My Green Head by Jack Houser