

viewfinder

News and information from Eastern Maine Camera Club

October 2006

The Digital Dilemma Organizing Media Files

Mary Hartt

Hint: start by trying the same method as organizing slides. This is a problem with slides and is more of a problem with digital. I am writing this with help from Tim Grey's book, *Media Management*. What and how to save?

Original Capture

I recommend saving your original files right out of the camera. This means that whatever capture you are using (TIFF, RAW, JPEG) you are saving them in their original form. Preserving the original capture provides a backup, so you can go back to the original and start over. This is important because as you learn, you might feel you can get better results than you originally did.

My files come out of the camera with a date. I add to the date a reminder of what or where I was.

For example: 09232006 common-ground fair. I save this under 2006 downloads. Next year I will start 2007 downloads. I think this is the simple part. The trick is to put a reminder on the date to help you

“I took a picture of a mule at the Common Ground Fair last year—where is it?”

know what you were doing or where you were. I also save these originals on DVD or CD.

I read a John Shaw book years ago that recommended making very simple Master Files to save under. I keep my slides in plastic boxes titled *Maine, Locations,*

Family, Mammals, Birds, etc. For example, under *Mammals* I have sub-files named *Moose, Deer,* and so on. Under *Maine* I have sub-files named *Fall, Coast, Waterfall, Northwoods,* etc. Obviously, there is some cross-over. I file under the most logical heading and because *Maine* files are in the same box it is simple to look. *Keep in mind there are many approaches to staying organized. I am giving you mine (with Tim Grey's help).*

Master Image Files

These are the files I have optimized or at least liked enough to put into the Master File. Original capture has everything from junk I might throw someday to all the good/great files. Master Files are only the good/great ones.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WELCOME TO THE NEW
viewfinder

We hope you have noticed a difference in the look of the club's newsletter! We hope you enjoy the new layout and find plenty of useful information inside.

Since this is truly a work in progress, we welcome your feedback about what works and what doesn't. This is your newsletter and we want it to reflect your interests and your talents as image makers.

Speaking of those talents, we plan on showcasing member images in each upcoming issue. Our gallery section is in the works and will focus on a different topic each month. It won't be a competition, just a fun exchange of eye candy!

If you have questions, comments, suggestions, or images to share, please email us at the addresses below. We look forward to hearing from you!

mary@dysarts.com
liz.grandmaison@verizon.net

Mary Hartt
Liz Grandmaison

2006-2007 Club Officers

Susan Garland
President

Sally Arata
Vice President

Mary Hartt
Corresponding Secretary

Suzanne Trussell
Treasurer

Joel Holcomb
Statistician

Michele Barker
Snack List

Don Darling
All-Maine Competition Coordinator

Eastern Maine Camera Club was organized in 1977. Current membership stands at more than 50 members of all ages and skill levels. Our mission is to encourage and develop interest in amateur photography. We meet the first and third Thursdays of each month, September through May, at the City of Bangor Parks and Recreation building, 647 Main Street, Bangor. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Contact us through our Website at www.easternmainecameraclub.org.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I save digital just like slides—only no plastic boxes. Top Level Folders are the same: *Maine, Locations, Family, Mammals, Birds*, and so on. Under each file you can get more specific. Under *Family* I have it split between my family and Mike's and then saved under events. If I want to find a picture of Mike eating ice cream I go to Family–Hartts–July 4th. I have this picture on slide and digital. The only change is the hair!

Once you've decided on a folder structure that works for you and you have a sense of how the hierarchy will be defined, you can create a basic shell of that folder structure. You can then move existing images into the appropriate folders, save new images to the same location and create new folders as your repertoire expands.

I save all my Master Files at their full size and not sharpened. When I print, my workflow is to size and sharpen with Unsharp Mask.

I also make folders for organizing projects. These I leave on the desktop while I am working on them. An example is the project *Camera Club*. I have a folder with all the competition categories and the holiday project. Every time I open my desktop I am reminded I don't have any costume shots yet. With slides I have a sleeve for each category —*Costumes* is also empty there! I use these folders for brainstorming. Anything that remotely fits the category is added and when the meeting is upon us I pull out my pick.

Good luck – I hope this helps!

Basic Tips: Shooting Fall Foliage

- Besides photographing colorful leaves, look for any subject matter that says “fall,” such as pumpkin patches or old barns
- Don't forget about the smaller picture: fallen leaves on a forest path, reflections in a stream, macro shots of frost on leaves.
- Use a polarizing filter to intensify colors and deepen blue skies.
- Keep composition in mind. Remember the “Rule of Thirds” for subject placement, shoot from unexpected angles, look for leading lines like fences and paths.
- Try shooting foliage backlit by the sun. Leaves take on a glow like stained glass.
- Overcast skies can be your friend. The diffused light intensifies color and makes good exposure easier. Try not to include a broad expanse of white sky in your shots, though; it can fool your meter and result in underexposure.
- Play in the rain! Leaves look more richly colored when wet. Remember your polarizer for cutting reflections and keep your camera dry.

FAVORITE LOCATIONS FOR

Fall Color

Grab your DeLorme® Gazetteer and hit the road!

Acadia National Park • Baxter State Park • Bigelow Preserve, east of Stratton • Caterpillar Hill (Routes 175 & 15, east of Brooksville) • Kenduskeag Stream Park, Bangor • Leonard's Mills, Bradley • Katahdin Ironworks/Gulf Hagas, near Brownville Junction • Fort Knox, Prospect (check out the new bridge!) • Moosehead Lake/Greenville • Chick Hill (a.k.a. Peaked Mountain), Clifton • Bald Mountain, Dedham • Conant's Apple Orchards, Etna • Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village, New Gloucester • Maine Wildlife Park, Gray • Don't forget your own back yard!

Digital Black-and-White Conversions

Many Paths Up the Mountain

Liz Grandmason

Many photographers working in digital with a desire to create black-and-white images want to know what is the best way to get there. Digital imaging master John Paul Caponigro notes, “There are almost a dozen ways to convert an image from color to black-and-white; and you can probably find at least one expert to support each way as the best conversion method.” Not what you wanted to hear.

While there may be no one “best” method, there are methods that are more efficient and methods that offer greater degrees of control. In this series, I plan to offer you a look at some of the methods available along with my impressions. Among my resources are articles by John Paul Caponigro, Jeff Schewe, John Beardsworth and others, as well as my own hours spent communing with the computer. Ultimately, your workflow and your intent will determine which method is best for you.

Image Capture

We immediately arrive at our first fork in the road: to capture in color or monochrome? Fortunately, the answer is definitive, if not intuitive. For the best quality and tonal control, capture in color. The image captured by your camera’s sensor comprises three color channels (Red, Green and Blue) and offers you the widest range of choices for where to place tones during conversion to black-and-white. [Figure 1] If you capture in black-and-white, the camera’s software makes those choices for you. And you can’t revise those choices down the road.

Conversion Options

The images below will help to illustrate the various options and processes for B+W conversion. All were performed in Photoshop CS2, but earlier versions offer the same options. Before performing any of the actions described,

copy your file’s background layer by clicking on it and dragging it to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Palette. This way your original image will remain intact no matter what voodoo you perform on the layers above.

Method One: Convert to Grayscale

Photoshop first offers us a one-click solution to B+W: *Image>Mode>Grayscale*. It’s quick, for sure. But the results are usually muddy and lackluster. [Figure 2] However, it is worth checking out because once in a while, the default calculations can look decent. If not, *Control+Z* undoes the damage and you’re off to explore other methods.

Method Two: Desaturate

Desaturate can be done in one of two ways. You can go to *Image>Adjustments>Desaturate* and watch the color drain from your image

while still leaving it in RGB mode. Alternatively, create a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (click the half black, half white circle at the bottom of the Layers palette and select Hue/Saturation) and slide the Saturation slider all the way to the left in the resulting dialog box. I prefer the second method since it leaves the RGB data intact. You perform the adjustments on a layer that you may tweak or discard if you don’t like the results. Either way, Desaturate is quick; however, it produces fairly flat results requiring additional adjustment. [Figure 3]

Method Three: Channel Mixer

If you are familiar with using colored filters when shooting B+W film, the Channel Mixer should seem familiar. It allows you to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3

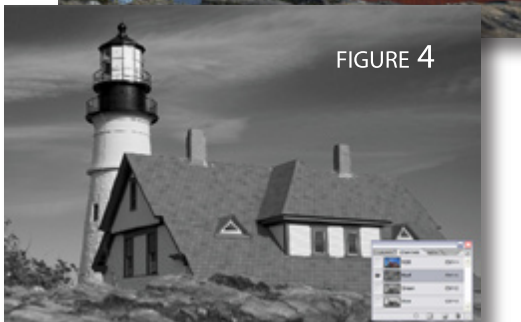


FIGURE 4



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

achieve such tonal effects as darkening skies and lightening foliage, thus giving you greater control than a straight conversion.

Before using the Channel Mixer, it's a good idea to see how each channel will contribute to your end product. Click on the Channels Palette tab and click on each channel to view them individually. This will help you isolate key tones to emphasize in the monotone image. For example, the Red Channel will darken skies in much the same way as a traditional red filter. The Green Channel will lighten foliage and darken reds without altering skies too much. And the Blue Channel will darken reds significantly while lightening skies. [Figures 4-6] When you're done inspecting the channels, click on the composite RGB channel again and return to the Layers palette.

As with Desaturate, there are two ways to perform this conversion: either via the Image menu (*Adjustments>Desaturate*) or by creating an adjustment layer and selecting the Channel Mixer option. Once in the Channel Mixer dialog box, click the check box next to Monochrome at the bottom of the window. The default setting in the dialog box is for +100% Red, 0% Green and 0% Blue. Based on your earlier inspection of the independent channels, move the sliders for each channel to emphasize the desired tones. *A word of caution:* the Blue Channel often contains more visible noise than the other two channels, so mix carefully. Most of the time, you will get the best results when the combined values of the Source Channels add up to 100%.

So far we've explored three methods for B+W conversion out of the "dozen" foretold by John Paul Caponigro. In next month's issue, we'll tackle a few more, each with its own merits for quality, efficiency and control.

Competitions

October 19

Competition Topic: Nature

November 16

Competition Topic: People

December 7

Holiday Party; each member may bring 6-8 travel slides or digital images to share

January 18

Competition Topic: Costumes

February 15

Competition Topic: Seascapes

March 15

Competition Topic: Motion

April 19

Competition Topic: Open

Clip & save this list for reference throughout the year!

October 5: Guest speaker

Betsy Brauhn of Sunset Productions on Deer Isle, Maine will join us to give her insights on "How to Develop a Second Career in Photography." All are welcome!



Eastern Maine Camera Club
c/o Dysart's Restaurant
530 Coldbrook Rd.
PO Box 1689
Hermon, ME 04402-1689