Questions on Notice

BPC February 24th 2022

The following questions were posed to a panel consisting of Judy Sara, James Allan and Helen Whitford with further input from Steve Wallace and Mark Pedlar.

1. Do I really need a tripod/ monopod if my camera has good image stabilisation. Please comment for A) Landscape and B) Birds.

   James – Some of the Many Uses for a tripod

   1. Long Exposures
      a. Waterfalls and Sea scapes
      b. Light Painting
      c. Low Light
      d. Astrophotgraphy
   2. Photomerge
      a. Pamorama
      b. HDR
      c. Double Exposure
      d. Zoom Burst
   3. Landscapes
      a. Depth of Field
   4. Time Lapses
   5. Wildlife / Macro
   6. Hands free
      a. Hand Shake
      b. Self Portraits
      c. Still life
   7. Impress Bystanders

   Helen – noted that when using a tripod you must turn off image stabilisation as it actually causes vibration when attempting to stabilise.

   For landscapes in low or golden hour light a tripod allows for longer exposure.

   In bird photography, a tripod gets in the way except when shooting from a hide or in a situation where you know the bird will come to a particular position and you can be set up ready.

2. I would like to be able to view my photographs and get rid of the bad ones **before** I load them into Lightroom. Is there a way to do this and is it the best thing to do?

   Helen – you can delete in camera (but Les noted that over time this can compromise the card. Steve noted that reformatting the card with each use can reduce this problem.) Jpegs can be deleted in Windows Photo. The camera's transfer software may allow for handling of RAW files.

   Judy – Faststone Image Viewer (a free software programme) allows you to download, view, select and delete RAW images of any type.

3. What are the best settings for star photography?

   James -

   1. Tripod
   2. manual or bulb mode.
   3. "fast" aperture of F/2.8 – F/4.
   4. white balance - daylight or auto.
   5. exposure 15-30-seconds. (500 over Focal length rule)
   6. RAW image format.
   7. Manual Focus.
   8. ISO of 400-1600 (or more)
   9. 10-second delay

   Judy – see pdf Star Photography

4. What are the advantages (and disadvantages??) of mirrorless cameras compared with DSLRs and which would you recommend?

   Judy – see Mirrorless v DSLR Cameras pdf.

   If you are starting out and have very little equipment, go Mirrorless as that is where most camera companies' development time and effort is going.

   I like mirrorless because they are lighter, the image stabilisation means I rarely have to use a tripod and the electronic view finder enables me to see what impact the setting changes that I am making have on the image that is formed (WYSWG What you see is what you get).

5. How should I prevent and/or correct colour cast in my photos?

   James – Colour cast is a pervasive tone that suffuses the photograph

Unwanted colour cast – faded photographs / tungsten and fluorescent lights / wrong settings on camera / reflected light / underwater / aerial photography.

Technique – Automatic corrections / Eye dropper tool / adjust colours manually with either RGB tool or HSB tool/ colour temperature and Tint sliders

Wanted Colour cast – sunset / creative filters / environmental lighting

Adding a cast – filter tools in NIK filters / merge with a Soft or Hard Light layer

6. How does multi-point focus work – how does it decide which focus points to work on. Is single point focus better – is multi-point just a lazy way of doing things?

Helen – Multipoint focus allows the camera to select what's in focus, rather than the photographer. It selects a range of points near the centre of the photograph but may not select the plane of focus you desire, leaving the actual subject out of focus.

Single point focus allows you to select exactly the plane of focus you want. For images of people and animals you generally want the focus sharpest on the eyes, so positioning the single point of focus to allow for the composition you want, whilst keeping the eyes sharp, works best.

James -

•AF-S – central spot – refocus when half press shutter (bird on a branch)

•AF-C – central spot – continual re adjustment (bird in flight)

•AF-A – Camera chooses (mostly Beginners and novices)

•AF-M – Manual – once set won't change (studio work / special effects / astrophotography)

Other concepts

•Back button focus

•3D tracking – only AF-A

7. How do I improve the quality of my competition entries? Please comment on such things as bright/over exposed spots; over-sharpening; distracting elements; principles of effective composition.

Mark commented that we need to take care not to over-sharpen, over-saturate etc. These enhancements may be necessary but should be subtle and unnoticeable.

Helen – see documents – *Photographic Composition Workshop*, *Evaluating an Image* and *Preparing Images for Competition*.

James –

- Subject –take what interests you. Don't take boring photos.
- Presentation – Post processing helps (learn by making mistakes)
  - Most useful
    - Crop
    - Contrast
    - Sharpen
  - Don't overdo it
- Style –
  - Try different ways of taking the same photo
  - different P of V
  - try less / / try more
  - Imitate others work
- Printing – just do it –learn to fix it if it isn't right
- Mounting – ditto
- Whatever the verdict – don't lose heart – keep going

8. Panoramas – what are the best settings? What are the key issues in producing good panos?

James – panoramas can be created by taking multiple photos which overlap by at least 50% so that the software has more data to correlate. A wide angle lens should NOT be used as there is distortion at the edges. (Helen - 50mm is a good focal length.) Vertical shots can be used to create a taller panorama. Exposure can be adjusted for each frame if there is a difference in lighting from one end of the panorama to the other.

If using a tripod, the rotation needs to occur at the nodal point of the lens, not at the camera mount.

Photoshop and other dedicated software such as Panorama Maker can stitch the images together.

It's possible to create a "globe" panorama by taking photos 360 degrees around at angles of 0 (the ground), 45, 90, 135 and 180 (the sky above).

James's actual slide points

- Hand held vs tripod
- Follow horizon
- Rotate on nodal point (actually where the shutter is)
- Overlap 50%

- No need to lock focus or exposure with modern software (If old software – yes do these things)
- Beware distortion effects – esp foreground
- Post processing helps

9. How do you use off-camera flash??

James – your camera may have a "commander" mode where you can have a dedicated (same brand) flash held away from the camera, which is triggered by the on-camera flash. Alternatively a device such as a "Cactus", which uses radio signals, can be attached to the hot-shoe and the flash. This has several advantages - it can be used with the flash in any position in relation to the camera, it doesn't trip other people's flashes and it doesn't require a dedicated flash gun.

James's actual slide points

- Speedlight vs Studio Lights
- Placement of flash for different effects
- Flash metering - Manual (Trial and Error) vs TTL(Through the lens)
- Triggering
  - Cable (used less and less)
  - Remote triggers – Nikon system / slave / Radio triggers eg cactus
- Finding the exposure – trial and error
  - Set ISO and Shutter speed – adjust App /flash intensity / distance of camera and lights to subject
- Front or rear curtain flash
- Sync speed (avoid shutter speeds faster than the Sync Speed)

10. A club member has had his photos downloaded by an acquaintance who has claimed them as his own. What redress is there? What would **you** do? And how can he stop it happening again?

You own the copyright to every photograph you take, even if you are paid for the photographs. You would have to officially sign over the copyright to another person for them to legally use the photograph for their own purposes.

The first line of action is to speak to the person, tell them they are infringing copyright law and insist that they remove the photographs from wherever they have used them as their own. If you're happy for the photo to be used in the particular circumstances, with acknowledgement that it is yours (eg. retention of

your watermark, or captioning), that could be an amicable resolution.

Otherwise, if the person does not comply, you may need to expose their actions – eg. on social media, report to the platform administrators or, outside of social media, expose to industry peers.

Legal action is a very costly last resort.

To avoid the issue, only use small files on social media and include a watermark in a place which is not easily removed.

11. What's one thing you always take on a shoot?

The really obvious one is "my camera" but sometimes, if an opportunity arises and all you have is your phone, it may do a good job.

Judy's "every shoot" kit includes spare battery and cards, lens brush, cloth and a WOW card with measurements and pure colours to place next to flora and fauna like tiny orchids for identification purposes.

James - Mobile Phone

12. Of the photo gear you have bought, what wouldn't you buy again?

Helen – Nikion 2x teleconverter. Should have bought the 1.4 or 1.7 or not bothered at all. (Does anyone want to buy it? Going cheap!)

Judy – Dot site that sits on top of the camera and did not help me find the birds.

James – Light Tripod / cheap flash

13. Is it possible to use flash units from the pre-digital era with digital cameras without frying the electronics?

Basically, no, except by using a radio controller like the aforementioned Cactus.

14. What's the difference between "grain" in film and "noise" in digital?

Steve – grain relates to the size of the crystals in the film emulsion and can be used to good effect. Noise is electronic interference which creates magenta, cyan and yellow dots in dark areas of an image, especially at high ISO, and is generally undesirable.

- Grain = Silver particles (increase with High ASA)
- Noise = Errors of CCV chip (Increase with High ISO or long exposure)
- Dust = dust on the film or CCV sensor

Post processing
- –Noise worse with sharpening and contrast filters
- –Remove Noise filters (Just blur except edges)
- –Add noise filters (add look of authenticity to non-authentic edits)

15. How is an "unsharp mask" used in digital and what is its purpose?

(James' spiral illustration) The unsharp mask increases contrast along edges between dark and light colours. It can make the image appear sharper but overdoing it causes unwanted haloes along the edges.

16. Can anyone recommend a SLR film camera repair person/business. I have an old Pentax that may need attention.

Charles Bridgwood, 0414 998 700, in Lower Mitcham has done work for a number of members, mostly with satisfying results but not always.

Twin City Camera House and Camera House in the Central Market both apparently have technicians who may be able to help.

Thanks to Paul Hughes who collated the questions and to Mark Pedlar for acting as MC.