



What's happening at Photochrome in April

April 2—7:30pm Open Pictorial and Pic Six

This is the meeting where everyone gets a chance to show off their latest and greatest. Experiment or go classic. Either way, wait for the ooohs, the aaahs, and the questions from the audience. "How did you do that?" is a frequent one. No judges, no scores, just conversation and a great learning experience. The Pic Six segment is when you show your offerings taken in March at that manic place called *Musee Mecanique*.

April 9—7:30pm Board Meeting

All are welcome to attend. This is where we plan and discuss meetings, activities and general maintenance of our Club. It is held in the Gallery Annex / Fireside Room upstairs on the main level of the Church and lasts about an hour and a half. Some terrific ideas come from the suggestions of members who just happen to drop in. We missed our meeting in March, so there will probably be lots to talk about this month.

April 18—10:00am, Sat. Field Trip Gary Larsen—Chair, 731-2140

Get your tripods, macro lenses and reflectors together for this field trip, 'cuz we're going to photograph wildflowers.

Directions: About three miles south of Linda Mar Avenue stoplight (last one in Pacifica) on Highway One. The Grey Whale Cove parking lot is on the inland side of the highway.

Facilities: No water. Chemical toilets available above the beach.

Hazard: Watch out for Poison Oak.

Photography: The trail is one mile long. It begins at the south end of the parking lot. There's a moderate incline that takes you up the side of the hill where it flattens out, becoming an easy walk as you photograph a variety of beautiful wildflowers. The trail ends down the hill at Martin Creek Gate. Identification of these plants can be found at "Toni Corellis' plant check list for Grey Whale Cove Trail" found at: www.stanford.edu/~corelli/mcnee.html.

For thumbnail photos of these plants go to: www.plants.montara.com/about.html

If you're willing to confront the long staircase descending to Grey Whale Cove Beach, you might get some interesting beach shots.

April 23—7:30pm Exploring Photography, Rebecca Jackrel

"Bears of North America—Black, Brown, Cinnamon and the Lords of the North." Welcome to my passion: Bears! From the deep Minnesota forest to the Alaskan coastline and beyond the frozen Canadian tundra, the Bear reigns as one of the top predators in North America. Photographing these giants can be rewarding and exhilarating. Join me for a night of black and white bears and the shades between to discover locations where you can safely observe and photograph these majestic creatures!

Volume 64, Issue 4

APRIL 2009

Schedule

**April 2—7:30pm
Open Pictorial & Pic Six**

**April 9—7:30pm
Board Meeting**

**April 18—10:00am
Field Trip—Wildflowers
Gray Whale Cove Trail**

**April 23—7:30pm
Rebecca Jackrel's
Bears of North America**

Save meeting time. Send your digital images by midnight Wednesday(s) to:

Photochromeprojectionist@gmail.com

Mark your images:

Category*-First Name-Last Name-Title. Jpg

*categories are:

PicSix (up to 6 images taken on Field Trips)

OP (Open Pictorial) two images

TN (Theme Night) two images per theme.

Please note: digital images should be resized so that the longest side is no more than 1024 pixels. That is how they fit properly on our projection equipment.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION FORCE of the PHOTOCROME CAMERA CLUB

Photos and Story by Garrett Griffin



On the third Saturday of February, nine intrepid followers of Francis MacPhotochromer met under lowering skies in front of San Francisco's landmark Ferry Building. Though threatening, the weather held. The day's mission for the Photochromers was to photograph the Farmer's Market, looking for the unusual, the different, the unexpected, even the abnormal. The crowds would fulfill the latter criterion. The three former would be left to the individual Photochromer's discerning eye.

After the pre-mission briefing by Francis himself, the little group of nine, all Double 0 photographers, sought to fulfill their own part of the group attack plan. Each was well armed with camera, flash, film and memory cards. Some even wore body armor under their clothes, think Kevlar, to protect them from the steamrolling hoards of humanity.

The members of the Impossible Mission Force of the Photochrome Camera Club set out on their assigned tasks. Gary Larsen, Pam and Bob Nelson went north. Alan Heald, Suis Cho and Jim Elliot moved southward, while Silvia Chi-

ari, Chris Kibre and Garrett Griffin took the building itself to the east. Our leader, Francis MacPhotochromer, ventured west up Market Street, for what reason no one knew. Those small groups later split again until all agents were shooting alone, shooting into masses of people, shooting into vegetable stands, fruit stands, shooting anything of interest. Even some not so interesting things became targets, like gum wads on the sidewalk, flies on the tomatoes and grubby little fingers pawing at tangerine slices and toasted almonds.

The IMFPC covered the market inside the Ferry Building where mounds of cheeses, slabs of raw meat and great puffy pastries drew the wrath of their lens. They shot the market behind the building that extended out onto the pier, where the IMF risked great bodily injury or worse from crowds if one fell or was pushed into the bay by

anarchists filtering through the unruly mob. Danger lurked



everywhere, but the members moved onward, shooting everything in sight even nearby buildings and antique streetcars.

Mounds of vegetables and fruit became targets for the agents of the still image. Tomatoes, lettuce, oranges, all neatly stacked, bore the brunt of relentless shooting. Jams, oils and pastries were targets of opportunity. Shoppers bargaining with farmers became trophies. Runny nosed children sampling cherries became prime targets. Musicians playing to captive throngs never knew what hit them. The Double 0's did a bang up job gathering visual Intel. Creative angles and candid lens ruled the day. People, not knowing they had been hit, made fine targets, caught wide-eyed or gape-mouthed. The team infiltrated and recorded. In a relatively short time, the entire area had been scanned and immortalized, frozen in time. The team had very quickly and quietly accomplished much.

At a pre-determined hour the members reconvened at a pre-determined place for a post-mission de-briefing. One member didn't make it back, whether the victim of foul play, a faulty GPS or over-sampling remained undetermined. The attending members de-briefed with lattes, cappuccinos and pastries. Little was said of the actual mission, not yet de-classified, but a lively comparison discussion of camera equipment ensued. Francis was the last to arrive, having deployed deep in country. He removed his body armor and joined the confab, spilling a caramel latte on the recently shed Kevlar vest. Thus situated, the members agreed to search for the missing Photochromer at the next regularly scheduled meeting, before putting out an APB.

TOUR: Wildflowers in the City April 5, 11:00-3:00pm

Our Gail Secchia is one of the exhibitors in this annual event presented by the Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Here is what their website says about Gail:

Host:

Gail Secchia—1722 Ortega Street.

"After years of struggling with the challenges of a sandy, Sunset garden, Gail now has a garden that is a mixture of what works. The garden takes little water, looks good, and supports wildlife. She has a pond with fish, much bird life, and Chorus Frogs, which were legally supplied from San Bruno Mountain pollywogs. Her garden is wildlife certified, with all the ingredients necessary: water, hiding places, no pesticides, many native plants and drip irrigation.

"Gail maintained the Biblical and Fragrance Gardens in the Strybing Arboretum for ten years, and was later recognized with a Conservation Award for her zoological horticultural design work at the San Francisco Zoo."

We know Gail as a wildlife photographer who attends Photochrome meetings when she can. She often shows images of the critters at the Zoo where she is Head Docent. But Gail went to the Galapagos last year, and while we didn't get to her February show at the San Francisco Zoo, perhaps she can be persuaded to repeat the show at a Photochrome meeting one of these days.



For far more information on the various San Francisco wildflower garden sites open to the public on April 5, and descriptions of the attractions at each, visit the Native Plant Society website at

cnps-yerbabuena.org

MAY 2009

Preliminary Schedule

May 7

**Theme Night & Pic Six
"Through the Window"
"Abstract Image"**

May 9

Field Trip—Muir Woods

May 14—Board Meeting

May 21

**Exploring Photography
Cleaning your Sensor**

Millerton Point has Osprey Activity

This nest, established by PG&E some years ago when they needed to relocate the original one, was home to an osprey on March 17. The bird was rearranging the furniture and making ready for a busy season ahead.

The site is located some four miles north of Pt. Reyes Station off Highway One. There is a parking lot and an easy path.



Photograph from outside the low fence with a 300mm or better lens.



Alice Steele

Judge's Favorites—Month of March

It's always good to see Jo-Ann Ordano. Three-times past President, and tireless booster of Photochrome, Jo-Ann moved down to Half Moon Bay a few years ago so we just don't get to see her that often. But she came to judge our "Favorites" night and gave her usual excellent com-

mentary. Because, in our new format, we talk with the judge, we all profited from the detailed discussion. Film images selected were by Bing Huey (flower & bug) and Mary Asturias (Mono Lake). More detailed images of the digital favorites, shown thumbnail size here, are on our website, Photochrome.org.



l/r Alan Heald, Enrique Aguirre, Gary Larsen, Jim Silva, Stacy Boorn, Viktor Gruber

Ambient Light in the Digital Darkroom

Photo and Story by Martin Taylor

How many times have you heard members at meetings say, "It didn't look like this at home" when they see their image projected? Confusingly, others tell us that their images look pretty much the same in their home digital darkrooms as they do at the club. What's going on?

Members who have issues with how their projected images look rarely complain about the color balance being off but more with the *brightness* of their pictures. This makes one think that this is an ambient light issue. Ambient light is the light that is in the room other than from your display device (the monitor, laptop screen or projector); it's the light coming from outside through the windows and from your electric lights, both direct and reflected. The brighter the ambient light in the room, the harder the display device will have to work to render something absolute white to the viewer's satisfaction.

At the other end of the spectrum, physics dictates that a display device cannot display a deeper black than can be seen when a device is turned off, i.e., your LCD can show nothing darker than the black it produces when it is powered down. The more ambient light that is hit-



ting your screen, the less deep your absolute black will be.

Have you ever tried to watch a TV during the day in a very bright room? The reflections can be so distracting as to make the screen unwatchable and the colors and dynamic range of the picture are washed out in the extreme. The same TV in the same room can look great that night. That's the destructive power of ambient light.

When we project images the hall is made as dark as possible as this provides the greatest available dynamic range the projector is capa-

ble of. At home you want to mimic this situation. Your monitor should be the brightest light-source in the room by far. If you edit your images during the day, you should use blackout curtains. The wall behind your monitor should be very neutral (gray, black or white), so as not to *color* your perception of on screen hues. The ambient light in the room should be fixed, constant, diffused, indirect and outside your direct field of view.

If you have ceiling fixtures they should be dimmed as much as possible; if they can't be dimmed they should be turned off, and a table or desk lamp should be employed that is just bright enough to help you find your chair and to stop you tripping over your pile of back-issues of *Shutterbug*. If your room is too bright during the day, you should save critical editing tasks until the sun goes down, or you should think about retreating to the basement. Once you have reduced the ambient light as much as possible, you should recalibrate your monitor either manually or using calibration hardware and software in your low-light setting.

When submitting images for projection, be sympathetic to the conditions they will be viewed in at the club. Be sensitive to the ambient light in your digital darkroom. Perhaps it will reduce your disappointment when you see your images projected.

Wildflower Season

The Douglas Iris are beginning to bloom in Pt. Reyes and other lovely wildflower specimens are almost here. Our friends at the Marin Camera Club have put out a fine checklist of places to shoot and with the permission of Beth Schriock, and one addition, we reproduce it here.

Happy hunting.

Annadell State Park—near Santa Rosa
Bear Valley—Colusa County
Bodega Head
Edgewood Pk—near Crystal Springs Res.
Henry Coe State park—out of Morgan Hill
Hood Mt. County Park—near Santa Rosa
Ida Clayton Road (NW of Mt. St. Helena)
Jasper Ridge—Stanford University
Mitchell, Back & Donner Canyons,
Mt. Diablo
Mother Lode Country of
Sierra Nevada foothills
Mt. Burdell—Novato

Mt. Tamalpais
Old Knoxville Road-North of
Lake Berryessa
Pt. Reyes—Chimney Rock &
Abbots Lagoon
R. L. Stevenson St. Park—Napa Co.
Salt Point State Park—Sonoma County
San Bruno Mountain
Table Mountain— east of Chico

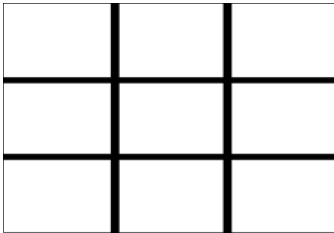


The Rule of Thirds

A review

Our August schedule presents us with a Theme Night topic called "The Rule of Thirds." It is a useful technique to know, even if it might more accurately be known as a Guideline, not a Rule. Some members are not sure what the Rule is all about, so this is a short review.

Think of your viewfinder as a tic tac toe game. Yes, draw the lines. (No, not on your viewfinder!) *Voila!* You've

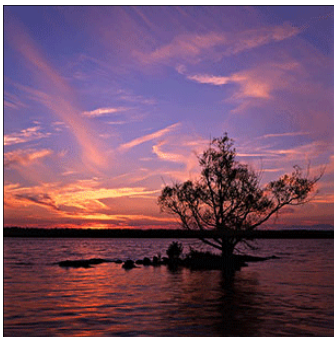


divided your frame into thirds and defined the Rule.

Now, the points where the lines intersect are often called the "sweet spots" because a subject placed at one of these intersections seems to command far more attention than one placed elsewhere in the frame. The bird, the tree, the rock, all these become more important there.

Interestingly, so does a horizon. You often find a horizon line either on or near one of these lines rather than smack in the middle.

Are you ready to learn more about this mysteriously simple rule? If you are friends with your computer, do a search on "Rule of Thirds" and you will find as much information as you would ever want to know.



Wikipedia image

PSA 75th Annual Conference—Yellowstone

September 20-26 are the dates for this annual conference. Not only is the venue a spectacular one, you can be sure the event will be extra special. It is the 75th anniversary of the Photographic Society of America. Photochrome has been a member for 66 of those years.

Seminars, field trips and parties are on the agenda. Check out the PSA website for all the goodies in store:
psa-photo.org

Welcome New Member

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Action! Roll it!



"**You Otter Be In Pictures**" was the caption in the Santa Cruz Sentinel when they ran the story of the camcording otter captured by our Enrique Aguirre. We don't know how KGO captioned it or the San Jose Mercury News, or that outlet in the UK who was on the line recently to Enrique. But Gismodo, a hot gadget site picked it up and announced "otters are making home videos of passing photographers."

All this happened in Elkhorn Slough in February when Enrique, Rebecca Jackrel, Jim Goldstein and four others, including Michael Kern, were on a day-long flat-bottomed Safari

Boat cruise, captained by Yohn Gideon. Enrique and Michael were the lucky ones to get good images. I'm told Michael's images will be in print shortly. You can see them by doing a Google search for "**Gardens of Eden Otter Cam**".

Enrique, who travels the world capturing wildlife (one of his great stories is in this issue), often visits the Monterey Bay area. He said, "I know I can go down there another million times and I will never see another otter with a video camera." He went on, "I think I have more chance of a penguin coming up to me and actually speaking English."

“Hello, My Love, Won't You Tell Me Your Name?”

Photo and Story by Enrique Aguirre

On a stormy day in November 2007, I set off from San Francisco on a journey that would take me to one of the most amazing places I have ever been to, Snowhill Island.

Situated on the east side of the Antarctic Peninsula, on the shores of the Weddell Sea, Snowhill spends most of the year encircled by ice and buried under a thick blanket of snow. Only for a few weeks during the austral summer does the pack ice break up and waves start lapping against the rocky shore. Bleak? Yes. Cold? Yes. Remote? Hell yes! So what was I doing there? I was looking for Emperor Penguins (*Aptenodytes forsteri*) and Snowhill is the most accessible colony of this species.

During the cold months of the Antarctic winter, these amazing birds endure some of the lowest temperatures ever recorded, in order to raise a new generation of Emperors. By nesting during the winter, they ensure that the chicks are fledged and ready to swim just in time for the summer, when the ice breaks, waters open up and the increased hours of daylight turns them into one of the most productive ecosystems on the planet. This gives the young Emperors the chance to start their life in the ocean at a time when it is most productive and full of food.

I had a clear idea of a number of images I wanted to shoot while I was there; however, I hadn't expected the conditions to be as severe as we experienced. After sailing through very heavy ice we got as close as we could to the colony—28 miles. This would make our helicopter operations very complicated as the sudden changes in the weather require that you are very conservative with your flying time.

On our second day in the area we managed to fly out to the vicinity of the colony and complete the 2 mile hike from the landing area to the actual colony. Enduring temperatures close to -10°F I walked through a white landscape of trapped icebergs in the driving snow.

As I turned a corner past a blue iceberg I saw the single most wonderful thing I have ever witnessed (I do seem to be repeating that a lot in this article!)—5000 Emperor penguins, calling, taking care of their chicks, feeding them, rounding them up in crèches.—simply amazing.



Four hours later I had to start making my way back to the landing site as my time was up. I had documented life in the colony from predation by Skuas to adults exchanging places and rotating their parental duties. But as I reviewed my images I noticed that I was missing one key aspect. I didn't have a photo of the elaborate Emperor penguin courtship.

During courtship the pair will stand opposite each other and perform a series of bows and extensions, calling and trumpeting until they are ready to mate. It is a truly beautiful courtship. Elegant and delicate, with fine adjustments to their movements, it is like a slow delicate ballet.

My first thought was that I would have plenty of time to shoot this during the next four or five days that we would spend in the area. I had not counted on the climate to foil my plans. For the next few days the wind, snow and low cloud kept our pair of Russian built choppers grounded. When we did manage to get them airborne again, we had drifted too far from the colony to make the trip under the required safety protocols. We wouldn't visit those Emperors again that season.

For the next few days I hiked over the frozen ice to a small island close to where we had 'parked' the ship in the fast ice. On the island a small colony of Adelie penguins (the other only truly Antarctic penguin) and some scattered Weddell and crab-eater seals kept me busy, but in the back of my mind I still yearned for a photo of the courting Emperors.

On our last afternoon on the ice I

was on my way back to the ship. I could see a layer of dark clouds on the horizon, approaching fast. Halfway there, I realized that the storm was moving faster than we had all expected, and that it would be upon us before we reached the safety of the ship. Fortunately, a line of red marker flags every few meters served as a trail of breadcrumbs.

As I completed the walk back in near white out condi-

tions, unable to tell my bearing without a compass, unable to make out the ship or even the horizon, I heard the very distinct call of the Emperor penguin.

Just a few feet away, I crossed paths with a small group of five birds making their way back to the colony.

Three were in a hurry, they had chicks and mates waiting for them, hungry after

maybe two weeks of waiting. The other two birds seemed to be more preoccupied with each other than with returning to Snowhill.

Could this be it? Yes! As the silhouette of the two birds faded in and out of the whiteout I could tell that they were standing face to face. The birds took turns bowing and trumpeting. Then the snow eased off a bit and I realized that I had been

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"Then without warning the two beautiful creatures walked away together into the endless blanket of white. As I packed my gear I whispered "thank you!" the wind returned a short trumpeting call."

granted my wish—courting Emperors—just a couple of hundred meters from the ship and in truly polar conditions.

The falling snow had already started to stick to my clothes and gear as I knelt on the ice and framed the shot. The whiteout acted as a seamless studio background and at the same time as a giant light diffuser in the sky. The subtle, diffused light rendered an almost monochromatic scene broken only by the bright patches of yellow feathers on the bird's heads.

I turned my DSLR to vertical format and attached a 500 mm lens to keep my distance and not disturb the couple. For a few minutes, that to me seemed to stretch out in to hours, I photographed the elegant

and tender moment as snow flakes continued to fall all around us.

Then without warning the two beautiful creatures walked away together into the endless blanket of white. As I packed my gear I whispered "thank you!" the wind returned a short trumpeting call.

It would be almost four more weeks until I returned home to San Francisco and had a chance of reviewing the images on my Mac and the two Emperors came back out of the snow

storm. Perfect in every way. Lightly covered in ice crystals, with delicate out-of-focus snow flakes floating across their black coats.

Truly polar.



Meetings are held the First and Third Thursdays of the month, except for November and December. They begin at 7:30pm and are held at the Fellowship Hall, Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 678 Portola Drive, San Francisco, CA 94127. For meeting details check: www.photochrome.org

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April 19, Yerba Buena Chapter—PSA Presents Spring Chapter Day

Yerba Buena Chapter of PSA will celebrate their Spring Chapter Day by hosting a very special program by Jeremy Sutton, who presents the Corel Painter program to enhance images.

Joan Field tells us Sutton will demonstrate "how to metamorphose our photographs into works of art. He is world-known for his work, his instruction, and his presentations."

She says, "we will also have an afternoon of great value with Claudia Peterson talking about how to take wonderful nature images and show-

ing some of her incredible work, as well as Larry Salveson, who will discuss the new features of Photoshop CS4 and Camera Raw 5."

Yerba Buena Chapter—PSA provides a forum for Northern California PSA members who are interested in photography. The Chapter includes members from some seventeen coastal area counties.

Non-members are welcome at this event.

There is a modest fee.

Consult their website for lots of information about the club as well as the registration form for this event. It is: Psa-yerbabuena.org.

Forms will also be available on Photochrome meeting nights.

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Photographic Society of America
75th Anniversary Conference



West Yellowstone, Montana
September 20 - 26, 2009

Member of:
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