

THE SHUTTERBUG

KANATA SENIOR'S CENTRE DIGITAL CAMERA CLUB NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2009



Photo by Colin Freebury of the Intermediate Group (This photo was taken at the Experimental Farm On January 5 when Colin was struck by the quality of the winter light.)

Schedules

March (intermediate meeting March 6; beginners meeting March 27): For the two meetings in March we encourage you to bring a hard copy of your favourite photograph taken since last fall. We will split into small groups and discuss the photos brought in. Each group will pick a favourite and we will attempt to scan them for display and general discussion. This is a great way to get some feedback on your photographs and perhaps suggestions and advice on how to make improvements.

April (intermediate meeting April 3; beginners meeting April 24): To date we can tell you that the meeting on April 3 will include a presentation on camera care. This will no doubt be of interest to all club members. We will get back to you with more April information at a later date.

February Meetings

We had two interesting meetings in February. Our February 6 meeting focused on flash photography. John Williamson referred to a 20 page pdf you can download from a free file sharing web site. Go to <http://tinyurl/ak4ls5>, this will open directly to the page where you can download the pdf titled Flash Photography.pdf.

John also talked about metering modes – see the copy of his hand-out attached to this newsletter.

On February 27th John provided us with advice on how to take good children's portraits. Here are his suggestions on how to proceed as well as a useful web site address and a tiny url download on the subject.

Childrens' Portrait Photography

By John Williamson

Based on: <http://www.all-things-photography.com/tips-on-child-photography.html>

<http://tinyurl.com/cvt83>

1. Be Prepared – Know the area where you will shoot, visit before. Check out the lighting and take some test shots for exposure, etc. Lots of memory card space, fresh battery, remote control. Know your camera and how to make quick changes. For SLR decide which lens, setting, etc.

2. Smile Please – you, not them!

3. Show Your Wares – let the kids see your stuff, if you have a spare camera, let them see/handle/take a picture, if not, . . . , chill out for a while before you start taking pictures,

4. The Setting – Toys, props, inside/outside. Be familiar with area and layout

5. The Natural Approach – don't over process the pictures, make the area one that the kids will feel comfortable in and behave naturally

5. Clothes and Props – if your kids/grandkids, comfortable, stuff they like to play with, contrast between what kids wear and background.

6. Equipment – flash, tripod, remote control, know your camera and deal with shutter lag.

7. Lighting – the single most important, natural light with fill flash, shoot so subject is shaded, bounce or side flash if possible.

8. Be Ready – camera up and ready, use AI focus (if you have it and if subject is actively moving instead of posing. Use spot (center) focusing if active and crop to rule of thirds; if posed rule of thirds.

The Formal Shots – after or before, posed (somewhat), clean up the area (cables, newspaper, remote controls, reflections and bright spots – especially if on the face. Not too close to the wall or you will get shadows.

9. The Eyes! The Eyes!! – set focus so that eyes are sharpest, if active shooting, spot focus and follow/follow/follow

10. Keep it Close – especially of your kids, interact with them, talk to them and keep it fun

11. Surprise – eyes shut, something special, open eyes and capture the moment.

12. Poaching – if you have a long range lens 10+ zoom or longer, great for casual outdoor shots of kids playing by themselves

John also gave us a presentation on how to use your Photoshop Elements to introduce dramatic studio lighting to your portraits. The next two pages give you all the information you need. The video referred to can be found on www.mjsphotography.com – scroll to the end of the page and click on “Previous Entries” to access.

Photoshop Workbench #161 – Dramatic Studio Lighting – Photoshop CS3

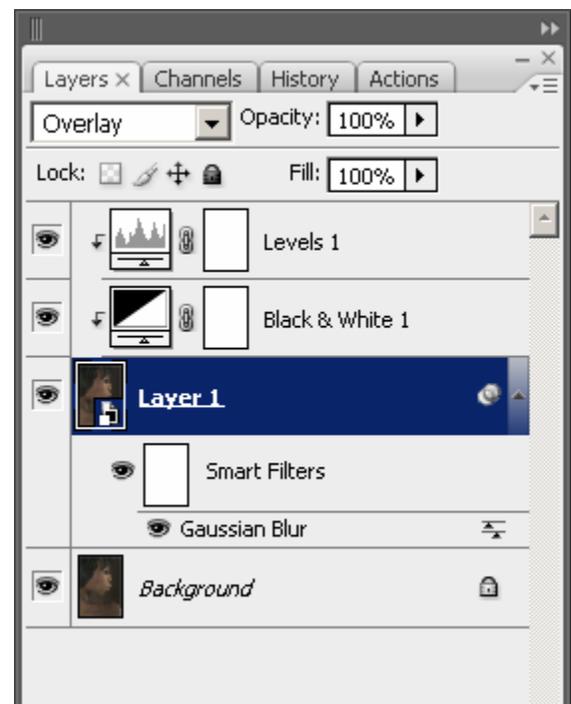
The video show how to achieve this for Photoshop CS4

For CS3 the step by step recipe is: (Once you have the picture open and have determined that you want to try out this technique.

1. Copy the background layer – (Layer, New, Layer via Copy OR Ctrl+J)
2. Create a Black and White Adjustment Layer (Layer, New Adjustment Layer, Black & White) – and accept all of the defaults
3. Create a Levels adjustment layer – (Layer, New Adjustment Layer, Levels). For this layer, move the white point slider to the right until the pixels just start to look pure white, next, move the black point slider to the left until pure black starts to show.
4. Click on the Levels layer (to make it active) and do a right click, then select Create Clipping Mask . Next, click on the Black and White adjustment layer, right click, then select Create Clipping Mask. Once completed, both the adjustment layers will be indented and linked to the layer that you copied in step 1.
5. Next, click on the copied layer that you created in step 1 to make it active. Right click and select Convert to Smart Object. (not absolutely necessary, but allows you to adjust the blurring you do in the next step)

6. With the copied layer active (it should be if you have completed step 5), do a Filter, Blur, Gaussian Blur and set the pixels slider so that it looks just out of focus. Click OK to complete.
7. Now for the final step, change the blend mode to Overlay – you can also try Soft Light and possibly Hard Light as they all do similar things. You can also reduce the opacity of the

In CS3, the completed layer stack will look like this:



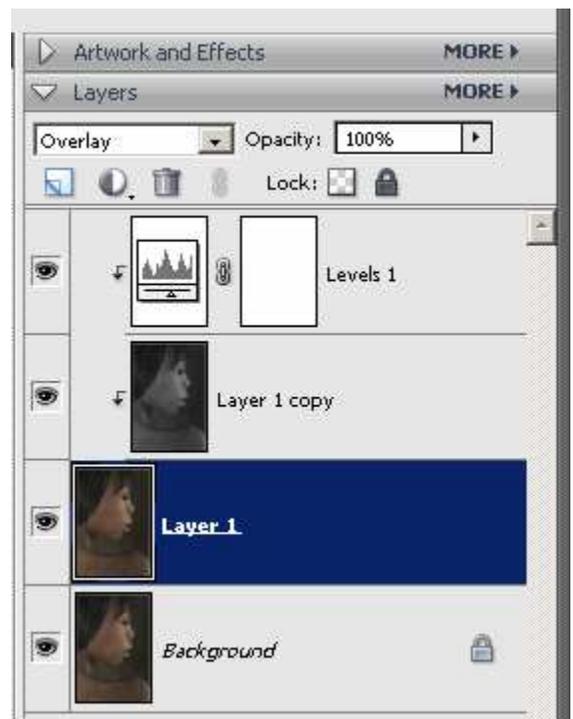
copied layer to reduce the over-all effect. And, finally, you can double click on the Levels adjustment layer and tweak the sliders to see what looks right – it will vary from picture to picture.

For Elements (based on Elements 5, but similar in most versions)

1. Copy the background layer – (Layer, New, Layer via Copy OR Ctrl+J)
2. With the copied layer active (it should be), do a Filter, Blur, Gaussian Blur and set the pixels slider so that it looks just out of focus. Click OK to complete.
3. Copy the copied layer – (Layer, New, Layer via Copy OR Ctrl+J). This layer will become the black and white layer
4. Change this copied layer to black and white – Enhance, Convert to Black and White. OK. (this step will vary with different versions of Elements. You can also create a B&W layer by doing a Ctl+Shift+U to desaturate the layer.
5. Create a Levels adjustment layer – (Layer, New Adjustment Layer, Levels). For this layer, move the white point slider to the right until the pixels just start to look pure white, next, move the black point slider to the left until pure black starts to show.
6. Click on the Levels layer (to make it active) then do a Layer, Group with Previous OR Ctrl+G. Next, click on the Black & White Layer and do the Layer, Group with Previous OR Ctrl+G
7. Next, click on the layer that you created in step 1 and change the blend mode to Overlay – you can also try Soft Light and possibly Hard

Light as they all do similar things. You can also reduce the opacity of the copied layer to reduce the over all effect. And, finally, you can double click on the Levels adjustment layer and tweak the sliders to see what looks right – it will vary from picture to picture

In Elements, the completed layer stack will look like this



Marg's Tips and Hints

1. Pro Sharpening for Photoshop users is a method which allows you to sharpen images without creating halos and colour artifacts.
2. Wrap your camera strap around your arm to get steady hand-held shots.
3. Avoid changing lenses in dusty conditions as your sensors will become dusty. You will see the effects of the dust when you open your images in Photoshop.
4. Use bracketing when you are not sure about your exposure.
5. Dawn and dusk are known as the golden rule of landscape photography
6. Become married to your tripod when shooting in low light.
7. The pros shoot in Aperture Priority which allows you to creatively present the photo.

Web Sites

Here are some interesting web sites forwarded by Agnes and Bill McIvor.

www.potonhead.com/simcam - this is an on-line camera simulator designed to teach basic photographic principles.

www.woodgears.ca/eyeball - neat exercises to test how good your eyes are at detecting shapes.

www.picturesocial.com - for examples of other peoples' work.

www.picturecorrect.com - provides tips on photography.

Photoshop Elements Shortcuts

By Bill Robertson

Photoshop Elements has more than 195 keyboard shortcuts - more than any other program I own! Some of my favourites are:

]	Increase brush size
[Decrease brush size
<CTRL>0	Fit image in window
<CTRL>+	Zoom in
<CTRL>-	Zoom out
<SHIFT>	Switch to Hand tool (when not in text edit mode)
<CTRL>J	New layer via copy
<ALT>left click	Open an adjustment layer as a mask for editing

There's a two page printable table of some of the most useful shortcuts here:

<http://tinyurl.com/PEshortcuts>

and a slightly longer list in a blog posted here

<http://tinyurl.com/PEshortcuts1>

For a complete list of keyboard shortcuts for different tasks, look in the Photoshop Elements help file under "Keyboard shortcuts" then "Shortcuts for the Editor" where you'll find shortcuts for"

Viewing images (Full Edit)	Using blending modes
Selecting tools	The Info Palette
Selecting and moving objects	The Color Swatches palette
The Magic Extractor dialog box	The camera Raw dialog box
Transforming selections	Showing or hiding palettes (Full Edit)
Painting and brushes	The Filter Gallery
Using text	The Liquify filter
The Layers palette	Using Photomerge

(from Photoshop Elements version 5)

If you have any suggestions for shortcuts send them to Lena at louislena2@rogers.com.

Our Mentors

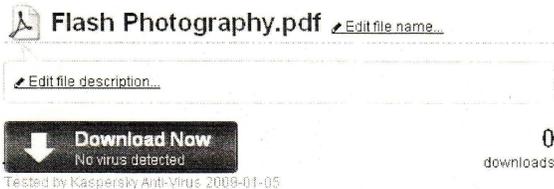
The Digital Camera Club mentors are now available for advice before each meeting from 8:30 a.m. till the meeting starts at 9:15.

If you have questions about your camera, bring your camera and your manual to ensure that the mentors have all the information they need about your equipment.

Metering Modes

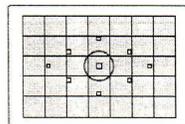
<http://tinyurl.com/ak4ls5>

photocamel.com/forum/tutorials/35338-flash-101-a.html



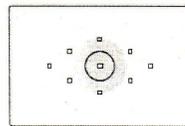
2 Select the metering mode.

- While looking at the LCD panel, turn the dial.
 - : **Evaluative metering**
 - : **Partial metering**
 - : **Spot metering**
 - : **Center-weighted average metering**



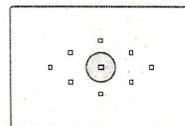
Evaluative metering

This is the camera's standard metering mode suited for most subjects even under backlit conditions. After detecting the main subject's position, brightness, background, front and back lighting, etc., the camera sets the proper exposure.



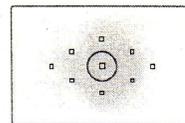
Partial metering

Effective when the background is much brighter than the subject due to backlighting, etc. Partial metering covers about 9% of the viewfinder area at the center. The area covered by partial metering is shown on the left.



Spot metering

This is for metering a specific part of the subject or scene. The metering is weighted at the center covering about 3.5% of the viewfinder area. The area covered by spot metering is shown on the left.



Center-weighted average metering

The metering is weighted at the center and then averaged for the entire scene.