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April/May 2018



“Knotty Kitty”
Cristie Reddehase



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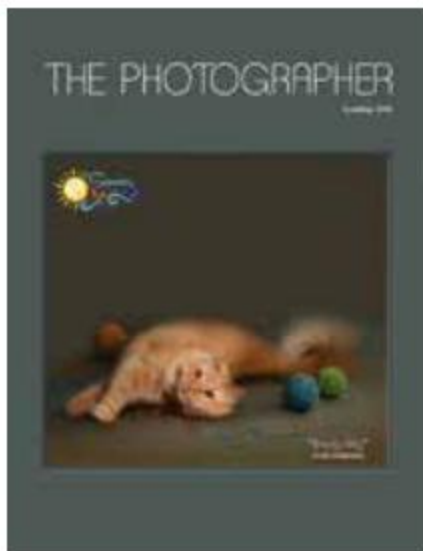
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THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Official Publication of the Texas Professional Photographers Association, Inc.

VOLUME 53-#3 Apr/May 2018



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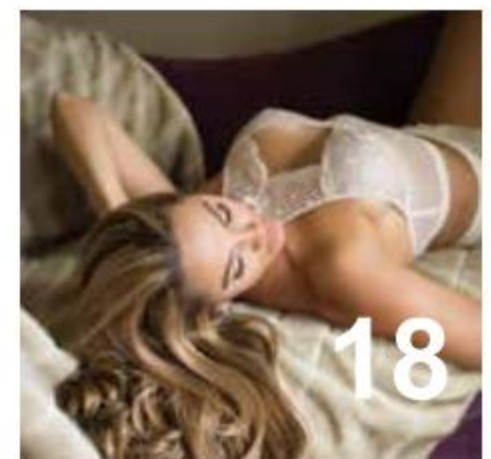
"Knotty Kitty" was created by Cristie Reddehase, of Spring, Texas, from a quick snapshot taken in her studio. "I just happened to catch my cat, Oliver, rolling around in the studio after a session. He's very sweet and a playful cat and I wanted to create something to keep as an art piece," explains Cristie. "I started playing around with the image in Corel Painter and decided to add the balls of yarn for an element of playfulness and to establish a color scheme." Cristie is owner of Silver Image Photography and has been an artist from a very early age. After taking art classes in high school, she attended Sam Houston State University.

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Printing by **Complete Printing & Publishing**
1501 W. Panola
Carthage, TX 75633
800-964-9521
www.CompletePrinting.com

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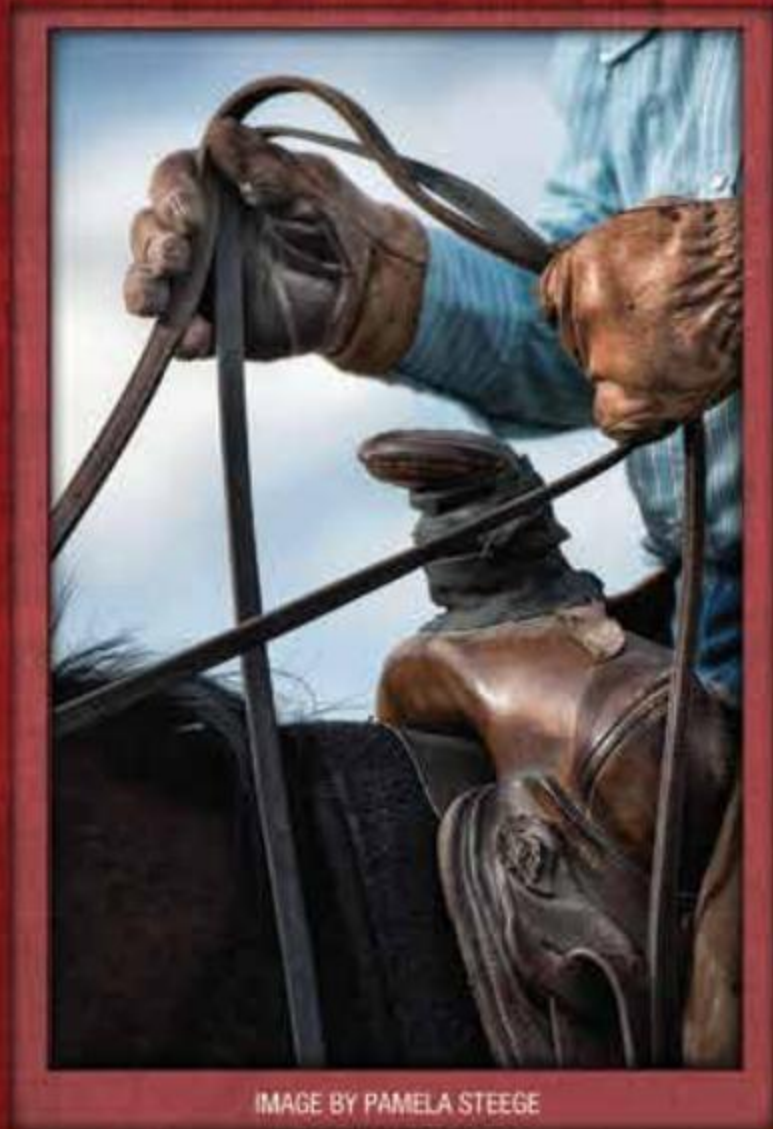


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From the President

Tammy Graham, TPPA President



We're All About "Networking"

With Texas School on our doorstep and Summerfest just waiting in the wings, I thought this would be a good time to talk about one of the unwritten benefits of your TPPA membership... "Networking."

Networking: NOUN

1.a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest:

It is impossible to put a price on the value of making connections within TPPA. When you participate in a TPPA event, you not only get education from speakers and instructors, but you also have the opportunity to learn from other TPPA members. At any given event, there are those in attendance who share the same struggles as you, have been where you are and have overcome difficult situations or hold a solution that will change the course of your business.

There is also a good chance that you might be the voice that a fellow member needs to hear. You can be the voice of encouragement, provide sound advice, or simply share how you work around common obstacles.

How many of you look forward to seeing great friends at an event? Chances are you first met those friends at a TPPA event and have become lifelong friends. This still happens at every TPPA event. Now, you might be skeptical at how this would happen among competitors at an event. You may wonder why anyone would share their business insights with someone they do not know. You may even feel a bit protective of your own "trade secrets." These are common feelings with those who are new to the association world. The trick is to move past those fears and get plugged in. Members who embrace the message of sharing soon realize that we are all better when all photographers are strong.

The hard part of all of this is that networking is not intuitive. It requires deliberate action to take place. Whether you are new to TPPA or you are a long-time member, networking begins with you! For example, if you are attending an event for the first time, you should make a point to introduce yourself to people and let them know you are new to TPPA. Make sure you carry some business cards with you to exchange with people you meet and follow up with a simple email letting them know you enjoyed meeting them. Ask for advice on making the most of the event... "Where is a good place for lunch?" or "Which speakers are you looking forward to hearing?" These are great questions to start a conversation.

If you are a seasoned TPPA member, make sure to reach out to those you do not know. Don't pass by individuals sitting or standing by themselves without saying hello or asking them if they have any questions. Try to invite someone new to lunch or to sit with you in a program. Go out of your way to make everyone feel welcome.

We are all part of the TPPA family who are working to improve our craft, grow our business, and find new solutions to becoming more efficient. The fact that TPPA members are willing to share ideas and build each other up is one of the things that makes TPPA such a special organization. I am thrilled that you are part of our growing association.

Tammy Graham
TPPA President

**If you are not a member of Texas PPA, this is my personal invitation to you to join!
Email Steve Kozak, TPPA Executive Director, at Steve@tpa.org or call 972-601-9070.**

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PPA VENDOR OF THE YEAR



Images by William Innes

new frames for torn edge prints

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STEVE KOZAK
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We have already heard from members who have shared stories of real savings from using the card. A TPPA member in Waco said she saved 50% on her total order. Personally, I recently saved \$20 on a box of envelopes that I buy about 5 times a year. That savings alone is enough to cover my entire TPPA membership!

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GETTING UNCOMFORTABLE

The Best Place To Be As An Artist



JT Blenker, Photog.Cr., CPP

Everyday you have the choice to be content with things simply happening to you, or choosing to make things happen. The latter tends to make me happier even when it definitely isn't as easy. In June 2017, storms were everywhere across Texas, into Oklahoma, south into Mexico, and finding a location to shoot astrophotography and wide angle night sky photos with a new moon were all blocked by cloud cover. I was checking every weather and astronomical forecast to see if anything would clear up and a tiny place in the panhandle of Texas was clear; Caprock Canyons State Park. I had been to Caprock Canyons before and was not excited one bit.



**“Star Bridge To Caprock”
by JT Blenker**

Caprock Canyons is a beautiful area with large outcroppings of rock and very dark skies, but it has some things that make it kind of tough to shoot for a nightscape image. It has quite a bit of traffic with campgrounds fairly close to some of the best rock formations. Everyone (and I mean everyone) has their flashlights on, cars are driving in and out into the early hours of the morning, and you have, usually, a few people light painting areas of the park. As a photographer that shoots a ton of night landscapes it's everything I try to avoid.... and then there are the snakes.

I knew that I wanted to shoot an arched Milky Way image and would have to figure out a composition, hike in, set up, and be ready to shoot within about 90 minutes of arriving. Oh, and set up 2 time-lapse rigs quickly as well so no pressure. Spoiler, the time lapses didn't happen. I scouted the South Prong and hillside areas quickly, took a pretty good guess at where two images would eventually line up well and the timeline for both, and threw my cameras and equipment into my folding wagon and started walking into the snake infestation that is the Caprock Canyon trails.

It's currently about 30 minutes before sunset and the surrounding landscape has already blocked the rays of the sun and the trail I am moving down keeps getting lower and lower, and I haven't exactly checked the trail maps, but after walking about 15 minutes and dropping down into a ditch about 25-30 feet in elevation below where the trail head was I am finally starting to walk up a hill. I can just start to see the composition I want, but the height on the trail is too low, but there is a hill to my right though that adds another 10-15 feet, the ideal height for the image I am thinking of creating. This perfectly placed hill is full of cactus, and what look like gopher holes. They are most definitely not gopher holes. I cry a little on the inside and very carefully make my way up the hill with my bag and tripod and leave the wagon on the trail just within eyesight. I refuse to travel the 20 or so feet for anything in that wagon. The “gopher holes” have kept me from attempting any time lapses for the night.

Throughout the next 3 hours, I operate within about a 4 foot circle around my tripod and keep a sustained watch around my tripod checking with my red head lamp light for any movement or new “sticks” that have moved closer to me. I took

this composition with 3 different lenses to maximize my chances of putting this large of a panoramic together. The final image is 3 rows of imaging high and in total came to 136 total images all with about 60 percent overlap. I was worried that either the sky would not stitch or the foreground due to two things: I wanted this to be shot with a 50mm lens on a full frame because the detail would be awesome, but going this large is a pain with so many images for the scene. Secondly, those people driving into the canyon and flashing their lights on and off in their camps are randomly lighting up the canyon rocks everywhere.

To convince the viewer of a scene you need consistency in the light direction and intensity. If this is not correct a plausible image will have lighting issues and loses much if not all of its impact. I wanted to create the foreground with the moon acting as a main light and illuminating the rock face, and adding dimension and a ratio with the ambient starlight. I had to reshoot several foreground areas a few times, and as this is happening the moon is getting lower and less intense. I finally took enough equally exposed images for the foreground that I felt I could raise or lower the exposure a few tenths of a stop and not lose the believability of the image. Finally, the moon set behind the ridge.

About 30 minutes after the moon has set I can begin imaging the sky and stars. I dug into my bag and started shooting with several different lenses, again to cover my bases in case stitching with the 50mm lens failed. Thankfully, the 50mm with the 60 percent overlap did the trick and the only issue was the amount of images. I photographed quickly, as the sky is constantly moving and within an hour this composition had already changed. When the sky imaging was finished I was only thinking about two things: this nightscape is going to look awesome! But, mostly I was thinking, I'm about to get bit by a snake climbing down this hill. After slipping some and falling once I made it down to my wagon and started heading back up the trail with my equipment while walking with incredible intention and attention to every detail on the ground in front of me. For the first time in Caprock Canyons I didn't see a single snake.

I was able to capture another series of images for a different panorama image (*right*) in the early morning hours and finally drove home. I would not have come to Caprock Canyons State Park and created Star Bridge To Caprock if the weather wasn't terrible everywhere else. I wouldn't have been in the panhandle of Texas if every previous new moon weekend was just abhorrent for star imaging with rain and cloud cover. I wouldn't have gone out to Caprock Canyons if plane tickets were a little cheaper. I wouldn't be so excited about how this image turned out if I had said, "Screw it!" and stayed home.

I'm happiest and I grow the most when I get outside my comfort zone. I think every artist should get a little uncomfortable and be okay stretching themselves. You will grow as a person and as an artist if you do, and you just might experience something extraordinary in the process.

A simple way to begin learning to shoot panorama night images is to begin during the day. I like starting off with a 24mm lens equivalent on a full frame, an L bracket so your camera can be vertical, and a simple tripod with a ball head. This technique may have some issues with stitching if you have too much foreground in front of you with a mid-ground element large in the frame. This can be fixed by adding a nodal slide to move the camera so there is no parallax in the images. By simply shooting a six to eight image panorama from left to right, you can now take advantage of reducing the amount of noise in your night photography. Simply, you can trade the greater amount of megapixels and therefore detail for noise reduction. The image below is a simple six image panorama photographed vertically across without any blending or additional compositing beyond putting the panorama together.

Nightscape and astrophotography can be very in depth but it is also an incredible amount of fun to learn and achieve great results. I also use a number of portrait photography ideas in my imaging because it simply adds to the final image by being intentional in the image I'm creating. I credit those processes to CPP and it's another tool that I can use every time I photograph and create.



"Between Night And Day" by JT Blenker



Six images (above) were used to create a breathtaking panoramic image of "Stars and Fire Over Yellowstone Falls" by JT Blenker (left).

JT Blenker is a Photographic Craftsman and Certified Professional Photographer with Professional Photographers of America. He leads astrophotography and landscape workshops throughout the United States with a focus on the National Parks. JT is also the Director of Communications at the Dallas Professional Photographers Association and is speaking throughout the USA in 2018 about photography, the night sky, and becoming who we are meant to be.

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WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Inspiration from Home



by JOE MCDONALD



My wife and I are lucky enough to travel the world leading wildlife photo tours and safaris, a job and life-style that has us on the road at least 30 weeks each year. Serious wildlife and nature photographers tied to jobs at home where vacation time and travel budgets are limited may be envious of that type of schedule. Some may feel frustrated by having less glamorous wildlife subjects accessible to satisfy their passion. I'd like to suggest that anyone feeling this way shouldn't, as some of the most productive photography you may ever do can be had within miles of your home.

Doubt that? Check various photo websites and look critically at the posted images. You'll be astounded, and humbled, too, by the quality of the work and the sheer vision displayed with photos of American wildlife, more often than not shot by photographers working locally. There's a valuable lesson here, and that is you don't have to travel to exotic locations to make great photos.

I'm often asked where I most enjoy photographing and my answer always surprises. It is: Home. I love to work locally, as this gives me time to explore, to try new techniques, to redo and redo and redo, if necessary, a particular photo project until I get it right. Now, you might be asking yourself why any pro would need to redo and redo a shoot, but as I mentioned in a previous article in *The Photographer* I do a lot of camera trap work where I never know what I'll get. Often, I have little control over my subject's direction or pose. It is a lucky day when everything comes together on the first attempt.

But photographing around home truly does inspire me. I look forward to the first warm days in Spring when the vernal ponds on my property fill with Wood Frogs, drawn here to mate and lay their eggs, an event that may last only a few days. The arrival of Spring in central Pennsylvania is unpredictable, sometimes arriving in early March, sometimes not until mid-April, and more often than not I'm not inside the state when the frogs put on their show. But I hope to be, and I'm always planning some new way to capture an event I've witnessed off-and-on for over twenty-five years.

I am fortunate to live in a rural area, with plenty of farm fields, woodlots, and a track of forest that starts at my studio and continues further than I'll ever see. Each habitat offers its own special treasures. One day in late Spring I noticed a Bobolink, a colorful but

“I love to work locally, as this gives me time to explore, to try new techniques, to redo and redo and redo, if necessary, a particular photo project until I get it right.” Joe McDonald

uncommon bird mid-state, flutter to a weed stalk in a neighbor’s pasture. Days later, after obtaining permission from the farm owner, I was sitting inside a blind, framing that Bobolink inside my lens. To me, photographing that bird was more exciting than most any bird I’ve shot on foreign trips, as I’d only had far-off views of Bobolinks before, and those were many years ago. I can still see in my mind’s eye the first Bobolink I ever saw, and ever since I lusted – yeah, that’s the word – for a chance to photograph one.

Just a few days ago I learned that a Bald Eagle perched regularly on a dead snag within sight (via a spotting scope) of my front porch. Again, after getting an okay from the land owner, I set up a blind, and when the weather finally cooperates, I planned on being inside, hoping the eagle pays a visit. This opportunity prompted me to call one of my photo buddies and declare a somewhat cryptic message on his answering machine, ‘I love where I live!’ As it turned out, the Bald Eagle wandered elsewhere and, with a six-week trip to Africa looming, I had to take down the blind. I’ll try again when I have another stretch of time at home.

If my past experiences are any indication, I think we sometimes take for granted the photo opportunities we have around us close to home. I know I have, and I have lived to regret it. One of my biggest regrets, ever, was not taking more time to photograph a Belted Kingfisher nesting on a stream bank within 100 yards of my home. True, I did spend some time in my

photo blind and I did get some nice images, but I could have explored this subject – one of the wariest birds in North America – in far greater detail. I made the mistake of thinking I’ll just do more shooting during the next nesting season, which never happened as the birds did not return!

In my previous article I explored the potential camera traps had for making unique images, and this type of work is perfect for local photography. You might be amazed what you can capture in your own backyard garden. Friends of mine who live in Texas complain about the Armadillos that frequently tear up their yard but someone living outside this unique mammal’s range, I’d love to have the chance to photograph one. Many years ago, a National Geographic captured an outstanding image of an Armadillo in mid-jump – when frightened, these armored, prehistoric-looking critters often bound straight up into the air – and I can still picture that armadillo in my mind.

In my neck of the woods Chipmunks can be a problem, chewing into the wires or linings of a parked car, or into and through a screen door, and many homeowners sharing their woodland habitat with this attractive rodent consider them a pest. I don’t, and one of my summer projects a year or so ago was to capture an Eastern Chipmunk in mid-leap. I succeeded, but I must admit that the project took several days. The story on how I succeeded might be instructive and motivational.



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Just outside my studio in the woods I have an 8x12 elevated water set, that stands about chest high. Elevated as it is, I can shoot from a water-level position without lying down and instead I can stand or sit and still have a duck's eye view. Preparing for this shot I baited opposing sides of the water set with sunflower seeds, and sprinkled a couple of seeds on a series of stones I placed between the two bait sites. Chipmunks and Gray Squirrels quickly learned that the fastest way to either seed cache was across the stones. Over the span of a few days I lengthened the distance between two of these rocks, forcing these rodents to jump as they traveled from one feeder to another. All that was the easy part.

Chipmunks and squirrels would visit the water set at varying times of the day and I didn't have the time to sit and wait for my subjects to appear. Quite frankly, I also knew I would not have the reaction time necessary to catch a chipmunk in mid-leap if I was waiting behind the camera. By using a camera trap, however, I knew I could get the shot ... or so I thought. It turned out it wasn't quite that simple.

As I discussed previously, lag time is an issue when using a camera trap, and my chipmunks were completing their jumps before the camera fired. I tried repositioning the infrared beam of my RangeIR closer to their launching point, but that didn't work, either. Either the chipmunks would lean forward just far enough to break the beam before they jumped, or they'd start their jump early, and still be on the next rock before the camera fired. Nothing seemed to work, whether I changed the distance between one stone and the next or repositioned the infrared beam, the chipmunks defeated my every effort.

I finally succeeded when I switched to an external high-speed shutter, made by Cognisys, the same company that manufactures the RangeIR and the Sabre infrared triggers. This shutter system has a nearly instantaneous response time – about 1/200th of a second, fast enough that I could now position the infrared beam mid-way between the two stones and be certain I'd catch the Chipmunk as it was crossing. And it worked.

Now you might be thinking that's a lot of time and effort for a darn rodent, and I would agree with you, but I must say it was a fun project, and it did result in some novel shots of an animal we often overlook or take for granted. Just as we often do with bugs, another common and diverse subject providing imaginative photographers the opportunity to make some pretty interesting and unique images.



I've certainly done my time stalking insects and spiders around our garden and the surrounding fields with a macro lens, and I'd really like to do more of this type of photography and exploration if I could just take the time. I rarely have that time. However, once again by using a camera trap I can take some very unique insect photographs while I'm doing something else. It's actually fairly easy.

As you all probably know, insects are attracted to lights at night, and insects don't just fly into a light, they swirl and mill about, etching figure eights and loops that can be mesmerizing. All of this circling centered around a light makes catching a flying insect with a beam a real possibility. The setup is pretty easy, although you're likely to be firing off a lot of images to land a good one.

In the last article I discussed lag-time, the delay between when a beam is tripped and when a camera actually fires. Fortunately, lag-time isn't an issue here since I'm shooting flying insects at night. I connect a flash to the RangeIR instead of connecting to a camera. With flash, there is no lag time, and when an insect breaks the beam the flash fires virtually instantaneously. Actually, several flashes fire, as I'm using wireless transmitters to fire several flashes for more attractive lighting. The flashes are set to a Power Ratio of 1/64, for an extremely fast flash duration, necessary for fast-flying insects shot at macro magnifications.

As I sat in my office writing this article my attention was constantly diverted to a constant stream of songbirds visiting the feeders just outside my window. Last winter I took the time to finally photograph some of the birds we've enjoyed for years.



Although we feed the birds daily we're not out on our porch when most of the birds visit, and I suspected birds would be a bit shy if I was simply standing around, and I didn't have the time to waste finding out.

Instead I set up a photo blind on my front porch, which not only minimized the chance of disrupting the birds' visits, but also would help to keep me warm on a cold winter day. I added a couple of branches and weed seed heads around the feeder for attractive perches and gave the setup a couple of days for the birds to get used to the change.

Birds that are accustomed to visiting a feeder may not utilize even the most beautiful perch immediately. They have a routine, and if you're working around your home it's wise to give the birds time to change their habits. A lot of people don't, and they get discouraged quickly when their grand plans to take bird pictures don't materialize immediately. A couple of days later I spent several very productive hours inside the blind, capturing images of subjects I've ignored for years.



This summer, for the first time in years, I'll be home for several months. While I know I'll have the usual office distractions, I've vowed that I would take the time to enjoy, photographically, all the opportunities I have just outside my office door. I'd encourage you to do the same!

Joe McDonald has been photographing wildlife and nature since he was a high school freshman and was selling his photos to the National Wildlife Federation. He has been published in every natural history publication in the U.S., including Audubon, Bird Watcher's Digest, Birder's World, Defenders, Living Bird, Natural History, National and International Wildlife, Ranger Rick, Smithsonian, Wildlife Conservation, and more. He is the author of nine books and one e-book. Joe is especially well known for his expertise in electronic flash and using equipment for high speed flash and for remote, unmanned photography. For more information, go to: www.hoothollow.com

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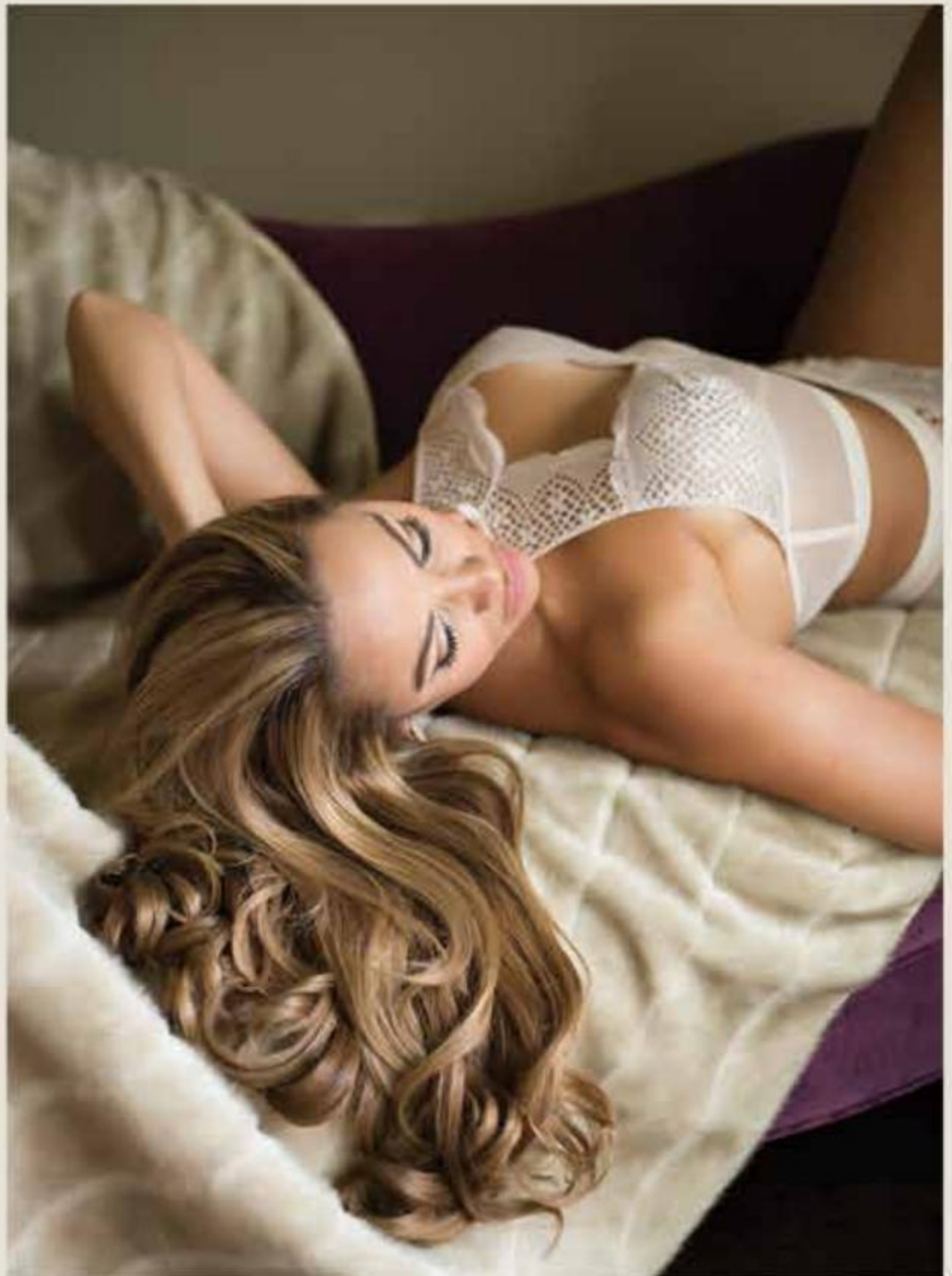
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TEN WAYS

To Get Out Of Your Own Way & Be A Good Photographer

BY CHELSEA WILLIAMS



I have learned a lot of things about photography the hard way. One I should learn from someone else's struggles. In this case learn from mine and be a better photographer.

1. Make friends with other photographers - Starting out you have this idea that everyone is against you. At least I did. I looked at all the other photographers that I saw as scolding and disapproving. They were 'Let's face it better than me photographers'. I steered so far away from them that I was literally an island unto myself. Isolation doesn't make great personal or business sense. Once I realized that the other photographers I met were actually wonderful, kind and helpful professionals, it opened up my world. I can't count how many times a lesson was learned from the person sitting next to me at a workshop. They taught me more than the person speaking. Make friends with a professional photographer that you can talk to and, bounce ideas off of.

2. Find a mentor - This is beyond making friends with a photographer. Find a photographer who has already achieved success and learn from them. Starting out I always knew I needed a mentor. There was so much I didn't know, and I was literally waiting around for someone to teach me. I had it in my mind that some amazing photographer would find me, take me under their wing and like a fairy godmother transform my career. Well that never happened! A few things wrong with that. I was not taking control nor responsibility for my own learning. People that are successful at what they do work very hard to get there. They are not going to give their valuable time away for free to show 'little ole me' how to do my job. Nor, should they. Find someone you look up to, who is good fit for your career plan and pay them to mentor you. You might also develop a great friendship out of it.

3. Invest in Education - I have discovered through continuing my education how much more there is to learn to grow as a professional. The truth is that you are never going to get better just by repeating the same processes. In this world educational options are unlimited. Do not create excuses for yourself. There are online streaming classes, online workshops, in person one-day workshops like the 'Texas Ten' or week-long workshops like 'Texas School'. I can honestly say that I have learned more about business and portraits in one week at Texas School than from my four years of my university photography. The university taught me basic skills and art. Texas School taught me how to operate as a business. I very highly recommend a week long intensive workshop if you can swing it. If you can't, take one Saturday out of your month or one hour out of your day to learn something new.

4. Network - I know that social media is the hottest concept now, and that social media will be part of our future. You're on Instagram, "fantastic!" Did you get any today sitting at home browsing Instagram and snap chat? Get involved with your community. This is where you live, this is where your potential clients live. Go meet them. Contact your local chamber of commerce. Google networking events in your area. You don't have to join everything. Just go to visit and meet people. Get your face and your brand in front of other people. If you have zero bookings then get up, dress up, go introduce yourself and be genuinely interested in everyone you meet until you get a booking.

5. Your clients care more about who you are than price - Stop talking about price all the time! Most of your clients don't really care. Yes, they will ask but that is a default question for them. What they really want to know is: whether you know what you are doing? Can they trust you? Will you make them look good? Will you make them feel comfortable? Do you value the same thing the customer values? Explain your process to them. Show them examples of your work. Show them testimonials if you need to. Show interest and talk to them about their family. Relate with them and have a real conversation. Establish a connection with your client.

6. Make the experience enjoyable - Earning money is great! However, I have noticed that when I am photographing paying clients for an extended period I get very focused on just making them happy. I forget to have fun! I love being a photographer and I want my clients to see that. I try to incorporate one shot at the end of each client session that is creative just for me. It keeps me refreshed and excited for my clients. Also, don't limit yourself to only shooting clients. For instance, if you love landscapes and flowers then schedule yourself time to go on a hike and shoot landscapes and flowers. If you want to try a contemporary style you don't currently shoot, just do it! Try and shoot at least one thing for you per month. It will keep your creativity flowing and all around happier.

7. Work with what you have - This may be the number one thing I wish I had truly taken to heart sooner. It is so easy to see how other people shoot and equipment they use and think that you must copy their style or process. You believe 'that' you WANT that. Instead, create a vision board and put a new lens, camera, lighting system, outdoor landscaping on there. You should create something to work towards. Don't give up if you see an advanced photographer using six lights to create a shot or incredible image while you are just using natural light and your camera. If you have a reflector use it. If you don't, make one. It is pretty easy. Do you have only one strobe light? Perfect, then practice with it. Learn how to bounce light off of a white wall to get the light you need. You only have a tiny bedroom with a window? Get creative. I have seen some Rockstar photographers that have started in studio apartments shooting with

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natural window lighting. They weren't embarrassed about it, they owned it. Don't use what you don't have as an excuse. Remember to invest in education and learn how to develop what you have.

8. Practice - I think this is hard for photographers. We are constantly told not to give our work away for free. That is kind of a "Catch 22" when you're starting out and trying to build your portfolio. You need to practice and practice often. Photograph your family, cousins or neighbor. Promote a model call, find someone to shoot for a shoot. You can't sell portraits if you do not have portraits to show. No one wants to hire an inexperienced photographer that no one knows or is not using. How do you offset developing experience by not giving your work away for free? By being strategic in who you choose to practice with. Don't do free work just because someone asks. This can be a never-ending pitfall and the potential for business exposure can be tempting.

Treat your portfolio clients as real paying clients. They may get something for free, but it doesn't have to be everything. You still need to be professional. The crucial point is continue flexing your photography muscle. You can include something for free and still stay in control of your business.

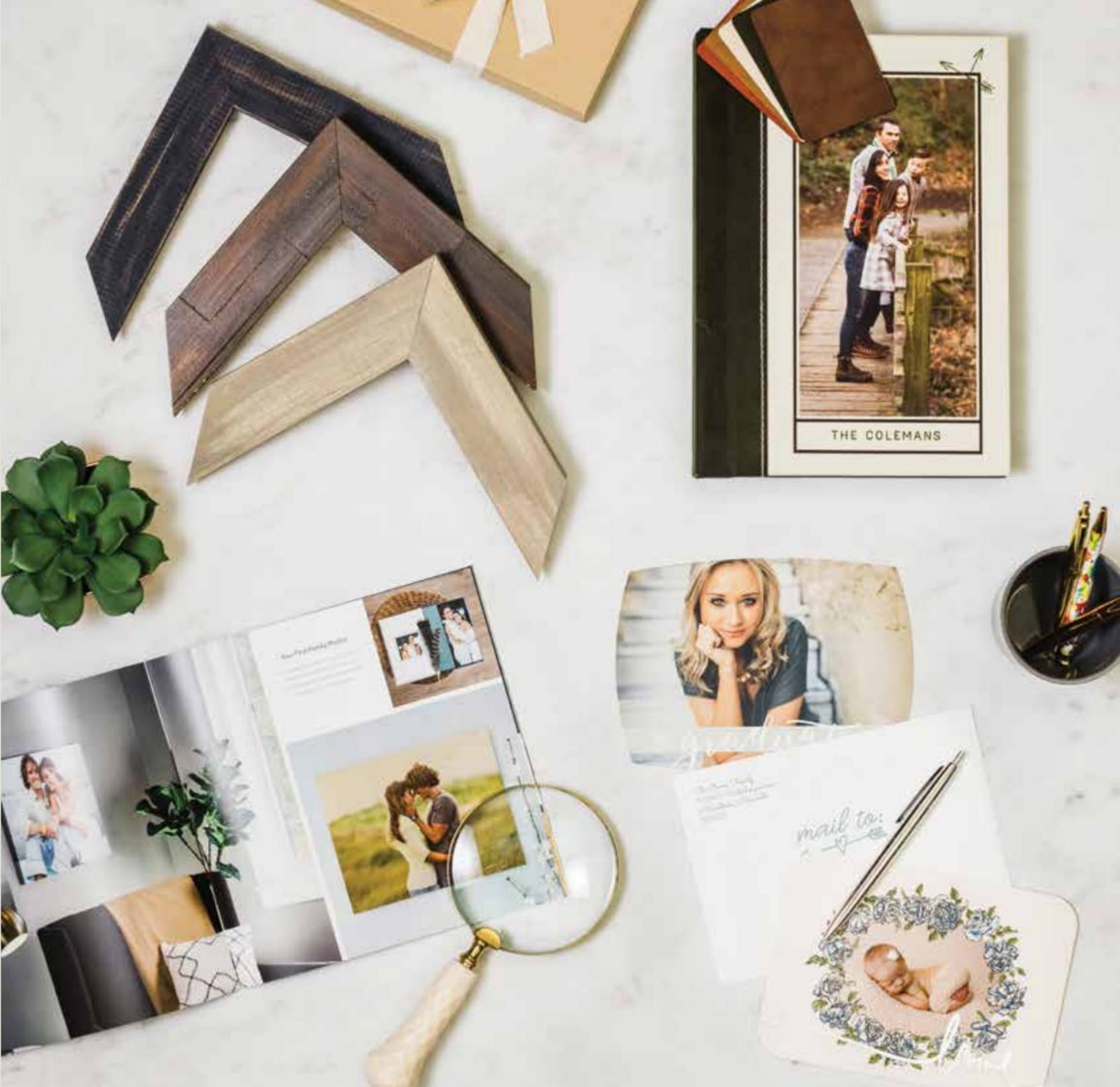
9. Everyone wants to give up - I don't think I have ever met a photographer who loved their job and thought they were awesome every single day. Everyone has days where confidence slips. Honestly, I think this can apply to every profession. You're going to have bad days every now and then. Lick your wounds and move on. When unexpected things happen, evaluate what went wrong. Own your work and accept responsibility for it. Learn what to do and what not to do different the next time. Keep going.



10. Be in control of your time - When I first started out, there would be several weeks without a client and then bam, bam, bam. A bunch of clients wanted to book all at the same time. I thought I needed to schedule all the work I could. The impulse reaction was to satisfy the clients schedules and agree to photograph all of them on the same day. Oh, and then I needed to rush and get these client's images edited right away. I had so much going on that I felt as if I could not get it all done. Then the next week was back to crickets. I learned that just because they all called and asked if I could photograph them on the same day did not mean that they all NEED the same day. Remember that you are the boss and you get to set your own schedule. Do not rush your work just to satisfy someone else's schedule. It is as simple explaining that you are already booked on that day and offer an alternative date. Most of the time, an alternative date will be totally fine. Controlling the schedule will leave you better rested and better prepared. Quality will bring more consistent work. Editing three or more sessions all at the same time cannot be done proficiently. I am doing better quality of work by controlling my own schedule. I DON'T have to stay up all night editing. The client may WANT their images the next day, but do they really have to HAVE that? You need sleep, you work better with sleep. Be in control of your time. Space it out. Everything will be fine.



Chelsea has quickly become the "go to photographer" for Headshots and Beauty Portraits in The Woodlands area. She has a bachelor's degree in photography from Sam Houston State University and is an active member of the Professional Photographers of America and Texas Professional Photographers Association. Chelsea was also one of the Texas 10 Workshop instructors in March.



Going Beyond the Camera

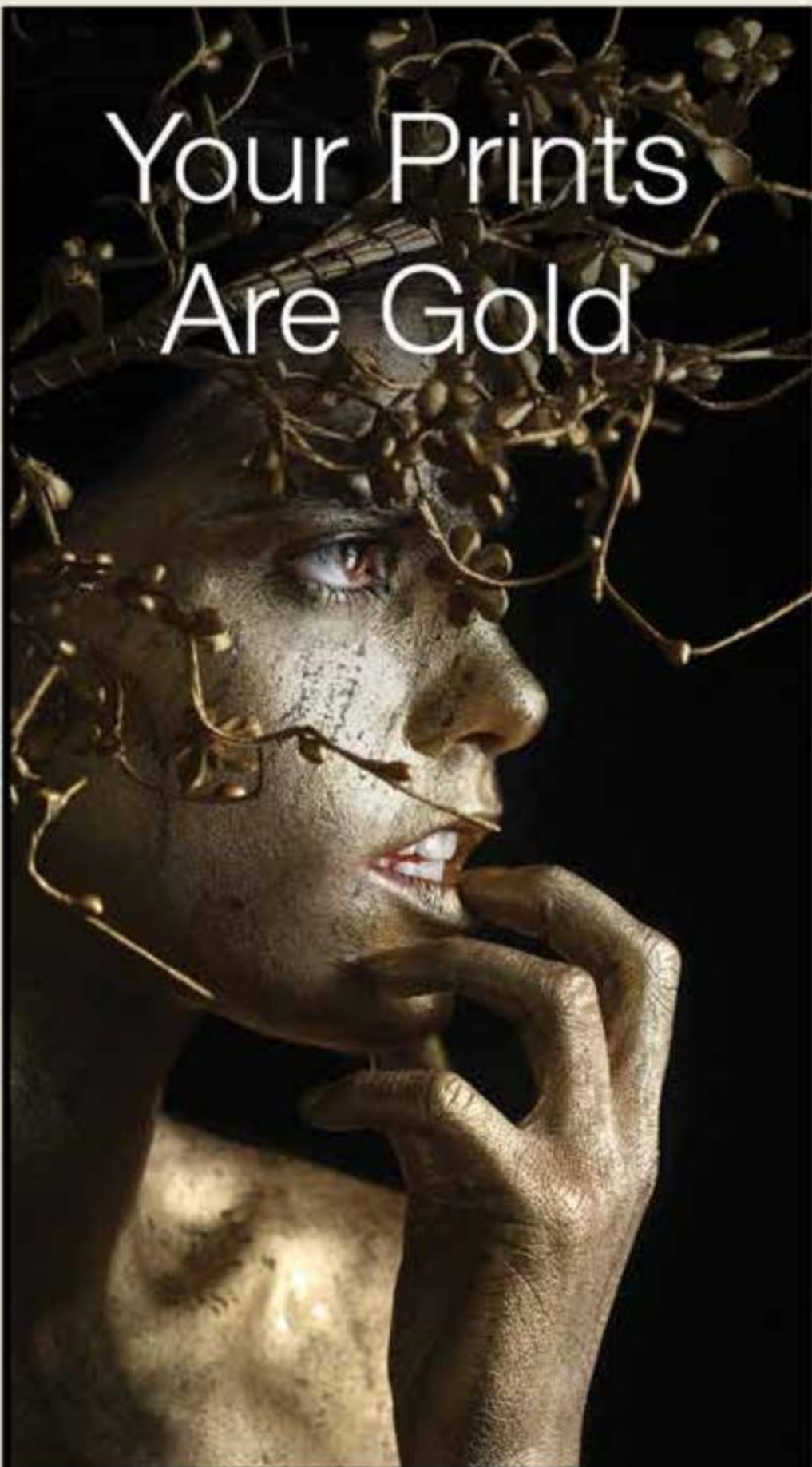
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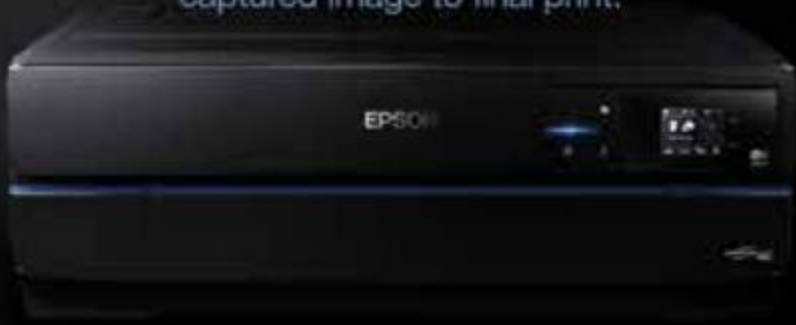


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Summerfest is a Hit Here's Why!



La Torretta Resort and Spa

This resort is a family vacation destination on Lake Conroe. It features an 18-hole golf course, 12,000 square foot spa, fitness center and an impressive water park. The Aqua Park is home to La Torretta Lake Resort's multiple pools featuring an elegant heated upper pool with an infinity edge that cascades down into a 6,400 square foot Mediterranean pool. Other pools include the Breeze Buster pool, Lay-Z River™ Rapids and the Splash Scape pool with an in-water playground, and the Pollywogs pool for the youngest of water lovers. It offers the best way to beat the Texas heat.

Dining options include the Coco Cove Poolside Grill, the Yoi Sushi Bar and the Lakeside Restaurant and Bar, just to name a few! There is a piano bar, a coffee shop and the Energie Lounge. Check out the many dining options at the La Torretta website: www.latorrettalakeresort.com.

The kids will be thoroughly entertained at the Aqua Park, but when it's time for some dry fun away from the pool, the activity options read like a novel. There is an arcade, miniature golf, and movie nights by the pool. They will enjoy putt-putt, a teen hang-out with video games, making s'mores and other organized activities and games throughout the day led by the La Torretta staff.



Family Fun with TWO FREE PICNICS

After a hard day of water slides, golf, hanging out in the lazy river, going to the spa and learning photography, you and your family are going to need to find something fun to do! That is why we brought back TPPA Family Fun Night! Family Fun Night is on Sunday night. You and your family are invited to join us at the TPPA Lakeside Villa for our 1st picnic. The fun starts at 6:00 pm. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and a cooler of your favorite adult beverages and enjoy the picnic sponsored by our wonderful vendors.



Meet the Vendors

After the picnic on Monday evening, head over to the conference center to meet the vendors and check out the great deals and specials. These are the folks who make all of this possible, so come and find some fantastic deals on everything you need for your photography.

TPPA Annual Photographic Awards Presentation

Join us on Tuesday at 6:15 pm for an evening of surprises! We will begin with the children's awards for the Kids Foto Kontest. Every kid who participates will be recognized and we will announce the winners from each category. The excitement continues as we announce and unveil the winners from the TPPA Annual Photographic Competition. Tickets to the event are only \$28 and include a buffet dinner. Kids tickets are only \$17. This will be an event to remember. So, bring the entire family!



Every guest room at La Torretta is a suite! The room rate for TPPA Summerfest attendees is an unbelievable \$112 per night. As an added bonus, if you book your room by June 1st, you will get your La Torretta Resort Fee (normally \$30) ABSOLUTELY FREE with your stay at La Torretta! Don't miss out on this huge money-saving offer. Register now and reserve your suite at www.TPPA.org/summerfest. Just staying in your suite is a vacation in itself.

Golf Anyone?

As you enter the La Torretta Resort property, you get your first glimpse of this beautiful golf course. We know you will delight in the beauty and the challenge of the course at La Torretta. On Tuesday, around 8 am, the 25th Annual TPPA Golf Scramble tees off. If you have never played with this group, come on out and make new friends and see what all the fun is about. Registration for this event is \$65.





Image Competition Your Chance to Shine

The purpose of the TPPA Image Competition is to allow photographers to enter photographic images to be judged against a Standard of Excellence and to assist the entrants in preparation for PPA District or International Photographic Competition. Those who enter are eligible for awards and TPPA points that apply toward the Associate Fellowship and Full Fellowship degrees within TPPA. Although the complete rules and entry forms can be found online at www.TPPA.org/Summerfest, here are some of the highlights.

Entrants may submit physical prints and/or digital images and multiple album (any event) entries, physical or digital. Each album counts as one entry. Each "case" may contain up to eight entries. All entries must be uploaded/registered at www.printcompetition.com. Click on "Free Registration of a New user" or simply log in if you already have an account. All images/albums must be named before uploading. You will then need to deliver your physical prints and/or album to the print room in the La Torretta Conference Center by 9 am on Sunday, June 24th. Image sizes and other specifications for physical prints and albums will be posted in the official rules on the website.

Also be aware that the entrant's name shall not appear anywhere in or on the face of the entry and no entry will be eligible that has been made under the supervision of an instructor or as a class assignment. In addition, no two entries shall be of the same subject, even if the subject is not a dominant subject in the image. Once an image has scored 80 or above, it cannot be entered again at the TPPA Summer Seminar Image Competition.

TPPA is committed to creating excellence for TPPA members and has invested in an IPC caliber station for judging digital entries. This station includes three judging monitors, a dedicated computer and software to run the competition, and the ability to project images being judged onto a big screen for the audience to see.

Finally, each year there is a special trophy presented to the maker of an image that best captures the TPPA President's Theme. This year that theme is "Class of 2018." The selection is made by the TPPA President from the general exhibit after the judging.

The annual image competition is a great learning experience for any photographer who wishes to excel at their craft. Watching the judging itself will provide you with a new insight that will boost your confidence and broaden your knowledge of image making. What you will discover is that others who have participated for years are more than happy to help you throughout the process. But you won't learn it if you don't participate and the best way to do that is to JUST DO IT!

Details at: www.TPPA.org/summerfest



Register for Seminar, Your Room, & Print Competition at
www.TPPA.org/summerfest



Image Competition BOOT CAMP

with Mark McCall

We want to take away the fear you may have of entering photographic images and get you prepared for competition and to see you earning those trophies and awards. TPPA believes that participating in the image competition process and earning those PPA degrees help improve your chances for success and sets you apart from the crowd. We want to see you succeed!

Image Competition Boot Camp runs **Sunday, June 24 from 10 AM – Noon, continues from 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM.**

Image Competition Boot Camp is **FREE** with your registration to Summerfest. Space is limited, so register early!

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Aileen Harding's

FINE FEATHERED FRIENDS

by BILL HEDRICK

Personal trial and tribulation is often a great motivator in shaping one's future. While caring for her mother after a debilitating stroke, Aileen Harding was sorting through some of her mother's old photographs and found one of her parents on their wedding day. Each one was filled with love and promise. It was at that moment that Aileen decided that everyone needed good photographs to commemorate their own lives and that she needed to learn how to create them. Digital photography was coming on the scene and she was hungry for knowledge, so she spent hours online with Kirk Voclair's Pro4um. Soon she learned about PPA and the Professional Photographers of Houston and enrolled in the Texas School of Professional Photography. She was on her way.

It was in 2005 that Aileen opened her residential studio in Baytown, Texas. It was small but she averaged around 30 sessions per year, primarily seniors, families, and some pets. But her exposure to her local guild made her hungry to learn more.

“Watching print judging for the first time changed my life. I never knew images could be so beautiful,” she says. “It gave me a goal and provided me guidance from various mentors. Because of this, the Houston Guild has been a big part of my life for the past 12 years.” In 2012, Aileen entered her first IPC competition and three of her entries were accepted in the Loan Collection. She was hooked.

“I’ve always loved birds,” Aileen recalls. “Living along a major migratory path for birds passing through for the winter, gives me the opportunity to enjoy birds year round. Songbirds, Raptors, Hummingbirds, Sandhill Cranes... they all travel through and many of them choose to stay awhile. But, living in the deep South also means there are lots of great birds to see all year-round. The older I get, the more I enjoy quiet time and just



watching them while listening to the wind in the marsh grasses and feeling the warm sunshine. But I especially like to photograph the larger water birds.”

Going all the way back to her film camera days in the 1990’s, Aileen loved photographing the Blue Herons. “They were my favorite bird at the time, with their various shades of blue. Currently, my favorite is the Reddish Egret. They make me smile as they dance in the shallows for supper, throwing shadows with their wings to make the fish scatter, and snatching them up with their pointed beaks.”

Photographing these beautiful creatures is also a tremendous stress reliever, as Aileen points out. “I love to go to the bay and roll down my windows and feel the wind and listen to the bird calls. Getting to see their different personalities is my idea of relaxation.”

Her technique is relatively simple. Aileen does not use blinds or setups. Instead, she goes to the rookeries during breeding season or along the marshes to find the birds in their natural habitats. “We have several bird sanctuaries in our immediate vicinity and nearby in the Galveston area,” she explains. “When doing wildlife photography, it is always best to shoot during the ‘golden hour,’ just before sunset or just after sunrise while the light is soft, diffused, and directional. As the sun rises in the sky, shadows become harsh and images are not as pleasing.”

She also points out how important it is to understand where the light direction will be in regards to the subject matter. “The same rules apply as in studio lighting,” says Aileen. “You will want directional lighting that gives depth and dimension to your subject. But, while you can create beautiful images in this scenario, your window of opportunity is going to be fairly limited.”

A good source for planning your own wildlife photo excursion is The Photographers Ephemeris (TPE). This app shows where the sun and moon will be and where the light will fall at any time, for any location on earth. “This is a great way to plan the optimal time to photograph at your chosen location,” says Aileen. “Plumage is always best during breeding seasons and this is when photographers come from all over the world to photograph the rookeries along the Texas Gulf Coast. Of course, Egrets and Herons can be found almost anywhere and they are spectacular during breeding season.”



After you've figured out what type of birds you want to photograph, where they are, and how they behave, it is time to consider the technical aspects of bird photography. Lens choice is extremely critical in bird photography as well. "Consider whether you are shooting full-frame or with a cropped sensor. A general rule of thumb is that you should have a minimum focal length of 400mm. Of course, it all depends on how far away the birds are and how much of the environment you want included in the image," she says. To "tell the story," Aileen usually shoots from 400mm to 600mm, using a fixed (prime) lens for maximum sharpness.

Aileen also highly recommends a sturdy tripod designed to hold a long lens. "Be sure that these items are rated for the weight of your camera and lens. Choose a head that allows you to pivot your camera to follow the birds in action. This would usually be a Gimbel or Wimberly Head, but I use a ProMedia Head that I purchased at the Imaging USA Trade Show at a great discount. Hand-holding a long lens and creating a sharp image is very difficult, if not almost impossible. Remember that the slightest movement becomes obvious when shooting at 400mm or more."

Other tips include paying particular attention to the background. "Make sure it enhances and doesn't distract from the subject. Ask yourself if the background and composition help to tell the story. Then photograph from eye-level if at all possible. This creates a more compelling image. If you plan to enter your image in competition, keep in mind that there seems to be an unwritten rule that birds must be entirely in focus from wing-tip to wing-tip and throughout the body. But, for other well-known national photographic competition, a little wing blur is preferred as it creates a more dynamic image."

For birds in flight, Aileen recommends that the focal point should either be center-focus or use dynamic auto-focus. "You will want to choose an aperture that will give you sharpness throughout. So, whenever possible,



I try to shoot at f8." Continuous auto-focus, with a shutter speed priority of 1200 to 4000, depending on the type of bird, direction of flight, and speed of flight, is also recommended.

If all of this is intriguing to you, Aileen recommends you first decide what kind of birds you want to photograph. Then find out where they hang out and learn about their behavior. "There are a number of great resources for this. You can join local birding groups or the Audubon Society in your area. Google can be your best friend when doing this research," she explains. "And don't forget, you can always put up feeders in your own yard. That's the easy way to photograph birds!"

Aileen Harding received her Master of Photography in 2015 and her Photographic Craftsman in 2017. She is also Chairman of the Board for PPG of Houston. In 2016 and 2017, she racked up honors including PPA Gold and Platinum Medalist of the Year, TPPA Best Illustrative and Best Wildlife Image by a Master, among others.

Her current goal is to qualify for Imaging Excellence next year. From what we've seen so far, we're betting she does.



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COLOR LOOKUP TABLES

by **Thom Rouse**
Texas School Instructor



Have you tried the Color Lookup adjustment layers? Although it has been included with Photoshop for some time, it's one of those features I've repeatedly overlooked until recently. Color Lookup adjustment layers are commonly used by video editors. I discovered their value when I was researching online tutorials looking for an effective method of creating a night for day look for an image. I researched a number of tutorials that I found time consuming and unnecessarily complicated. As I continued to search, I stumbled across the Color Lookup adjustment layer that I'd never used before. It is one of the many features in Photoshop that we tend to be invisible until we know about them.

A Color Lookup table (LUT file) is most commonly used for color grading by videographers for remapping the colors in an image to another set of colors. It essentially allows you to alter the color, contrast and brightness of an image with a single adjustment layer. My first use was for an easy night from day effect - a simple one click solution that was visually effective and vastly quicker and easier to use than many other relatively complicated techniques. I work visually and have no reluctance to using an easy one click solution instead of reinventing the wheel. In essence, a color look up adjustment layer allows us to store a set of multiple adjustment layers into one single adjustment layer. You can use the already available presets by adding a color lookup adjustment layer to a file and selecting a look from the drop-down menus in the properties dialog box. One click applies the look which can then be adjusted with opacity, layer blending modes, a layer mask, and even additional adjustment layers. You can add multiple ColorLookup adjustment layers as well other adjustment layers.

In these examples I used a simple fashion shot. Figure 1 is the original treatment, figures 2, 3, and 4 utilize the Night from Day Color Lookup adjustment layer with some layer masking and different layer blending modes. All were achieved far more quickly than individual treatments to each image which would likely have required three or more individual adjustment layers to achieve. Instead, a single Color Lookup adjustment layer was used on each.

There are approximately 40 different looks stored in the 3 color lookup drop down menus in the properties dialog box. You'll find them in the adjustment layers palette or in the drop down list under the half circle at the bottom of the layers palette. Simply add a Color Lookup adjustment layer and explore the looks under the drop down menus in the properties dialog box. The examples here illustrate the NightFromDay.cube look from the 3DLUT drop down menu. In addition to those already stored in Photoshop, there are many others available for free or for purchase on the internet. Simply do a search for downloadable color look up tables for Photoshop.

But wait - there's more!!! Have you ever spent a great deal of time creating a look for your image using multiple adjustment layers, opacities and blending modes? You get it just right and love the look, but when you try it again on a different image, you neglected to save the unflattened files and forgot exactly how you did it. Instead of working desperately to re-create a look or sliding in adjustment layers from prior projects, just get a look you like and export it as a Color Lookup table (LUT). Although you could record an action for all your adjustment layers, exporting a LUT allows you

to save it with one click and apply it to any other image you wish.

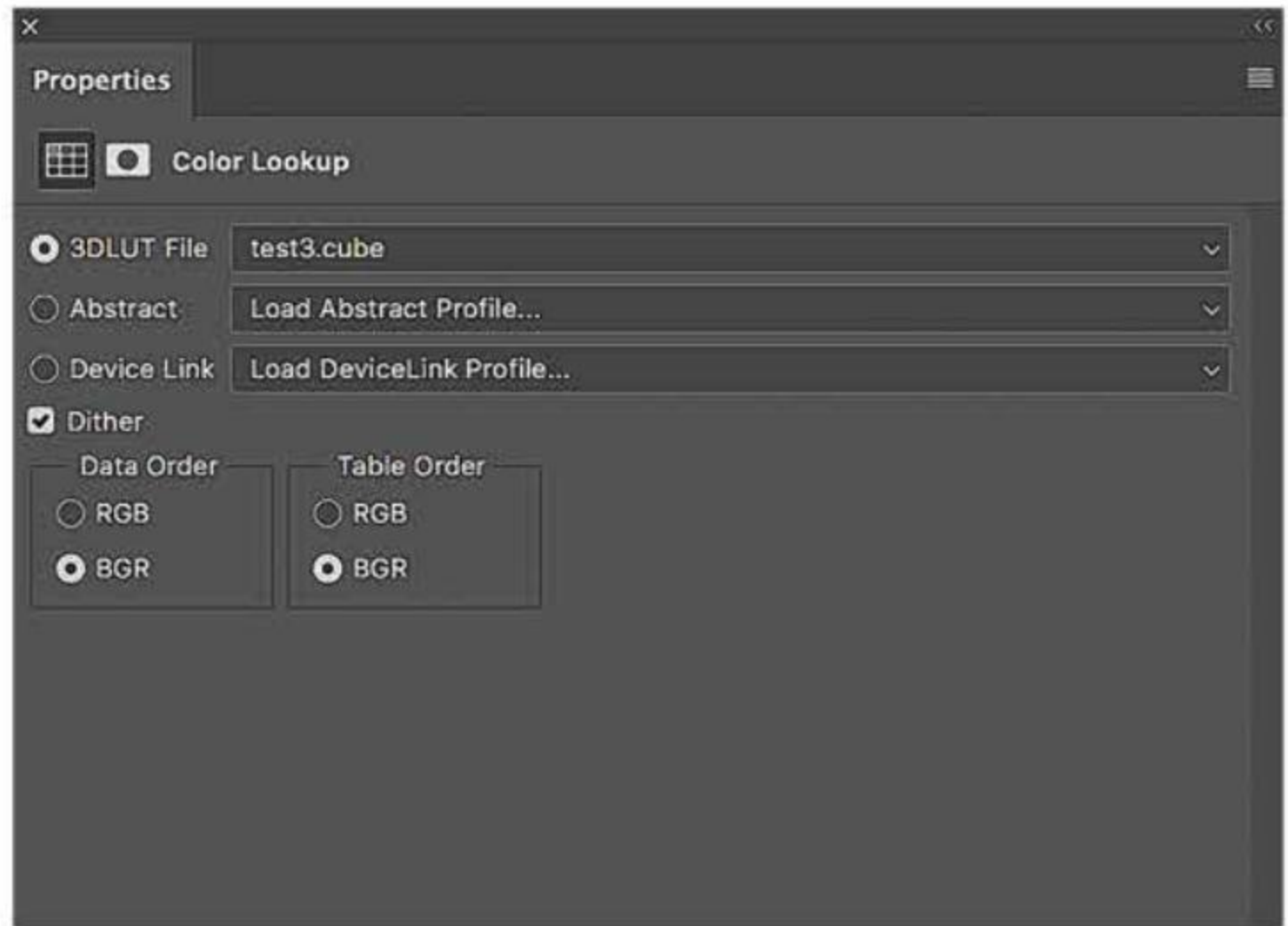
To save a LUT, simply work on your image until you get a look you like using adjustment layers, opacities, and layer blending modes. The image must have a locked background layer (Any work you've done with layer masks will not be included in the file). Then, select File > Export > Color Lookup. Select any or all formats, but I would suggest saving them all - 3DL, CUBE, CSP, and ICC profile. The ICC profile allows use on other software and devices and is stored differently than 3DL, CUBE, and CSP.

A description and copyright info in the export dialog box when saving a LUT. A medium 32 grid point should be sufficient, but you can go to 64 or 128 for higher quality with significantly increased file size. Click OK and save to a selected folder. When you want to use your saved LUT, add a Color Lookup adjustment layer to an image and, in the properties dialog box, click on 3DLUT file to load your saved file. Navigate to your saved LUT folder, and press OK. You'll immediately have the look you've saved with one click instead of having to drag and drop multiple adjustment layers or recorded actions.

You can utilize the layer mask in the adjustment layer as well as change the blending mode and opacities. I've found that using the .CUBE file allows you to change the "Data Order" and the "Table Order" in the Properties dialog box for some interesting alternatives for the look. I'm uncertain about exactly how or why this feature works but I work visually and I'm happy to leave the technical details to the engineers. If you are truly interested, I would suggest searching Julieanne Kost's blogs. If anyone knows, she will.

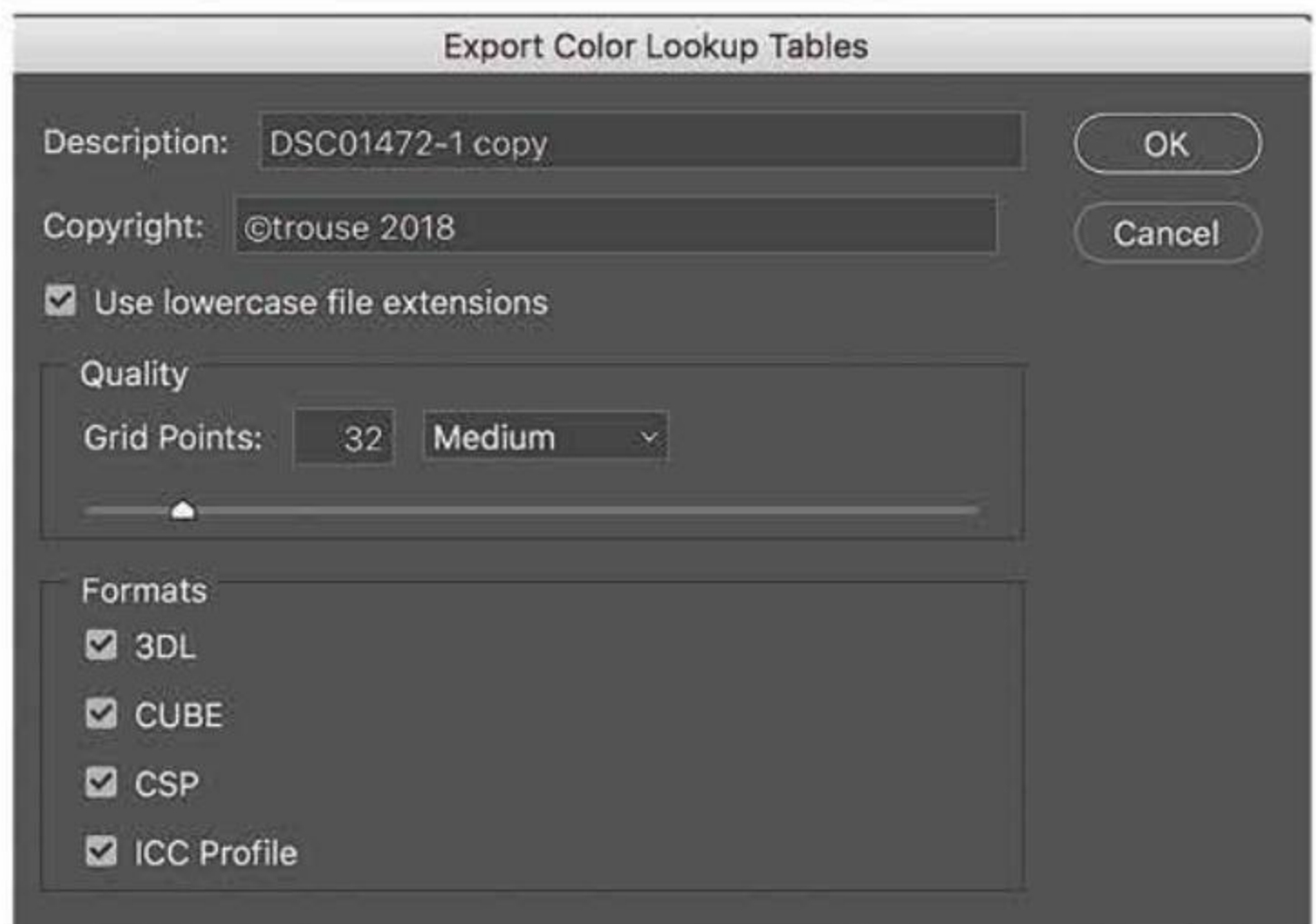
To add your LUT to the drop down menu in the properties dialog box, copy your LUT file and paste into: Applications > Adobe Photoshop (CC 2017) > Presets > 3DLUTs. The next time you open Photoshop your LUT will appear in the drop down menu. Your saved LUTs can be used in any application that supports LUTs including Adobe Aftereffects, Premiere, and many others.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that Color Lookup adjustment layers are not the answer to saving every look you achieve in your images. In some cases, the adjustments made to each adjustment layer you've added may be very image specific. For cases in which you've done a lot of work on an image, I suggest always saving a layered file with all the adjustment layers so that you can drag and drop them into another image. In many cases, utilizing the Color Lookup adjustment layer will offer a quick one click solution and significantly speed



work flow when you've achieved a look that works on a range of images. But for those looks you've created that are very image specific, having the ability to adjust each of the original individual adjustment layers may be useful.

Thom Rouse, a Texas School '18 instructor, began his career as a portrait and wedding photographer in 1994. Based near Chicago, he now divides his time between commercial, fine art and commissioned fine art images with his clients as the central subject of his pieces. His conceptual fine art images utilize real world photographs, blended and manipulated to create an alternative to real world perception. Thom also lectures and teaches workshops on topics ranging from Photoshop as an artist's tool, visual literacy and lighting and posing for figure studies.



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MAKING CREATIVE NAME BADGES

by **ROB HULL**
Texas School Instructor

If you've ever wanted to make some good looking name badges for an event, chances are you created a nice Photoshop file and spent hours editing the text layer that had the person's name. Edit, print, edit, print, edit, print, and on and on. But, there is a better way and it's been hiding in Photoshop for years. You can create hundreds of variable images in just minutes!!

Photoshop now supports data-driven graphics, a fancy way of saying "OMG, I can make a hundred name tags in just a couple minutes". And we're not just talking name badges. I can dynamically replace text, pixels or even hide and reveal layers based on the contents of a data file. Using this technique, I made name badges for everyone on our Ireland Tour and I could do it in just a few minutes. Let's look at what steps I went through to accomplish this.

Here are the Step-by-Step procedures...

Create your graphic

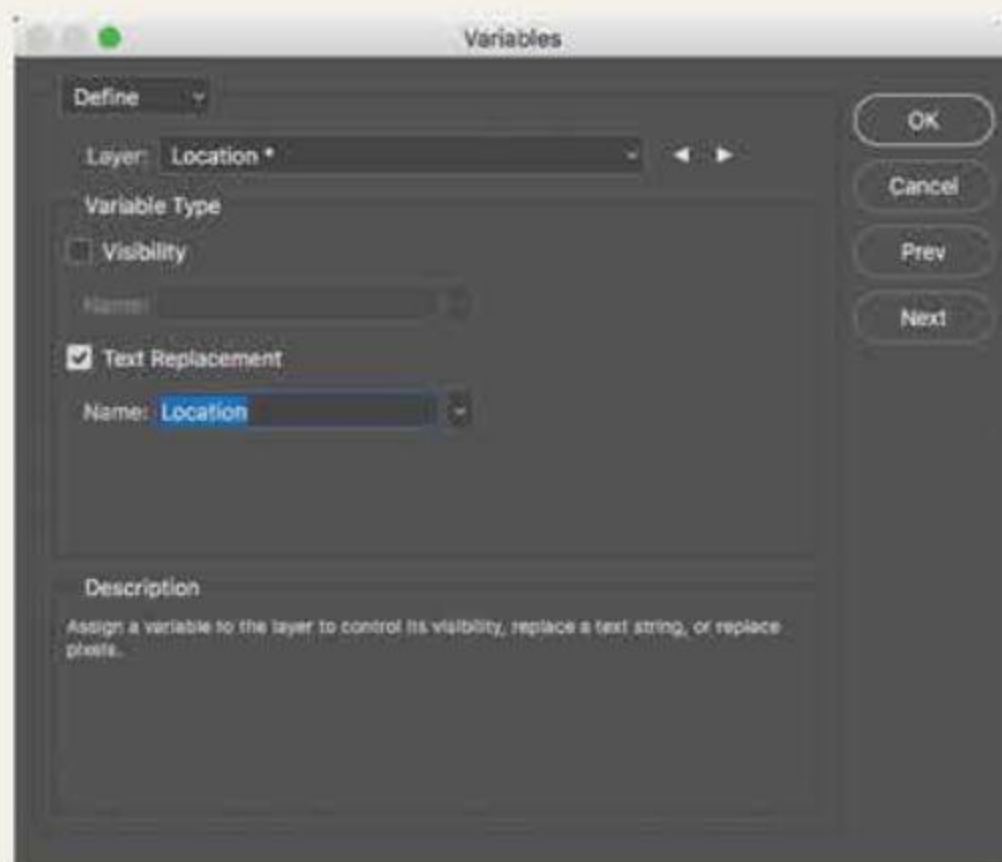
The first thing to do is just design the name badge. In my case, I used a background image and then created a text layer for the person's name and one to indicate where they are from. I used a font that looks Celtic and applied some layer styles to make the text pop. I also named each of these layers. They will show up in menus later so it helps me keep track of what each layer contains.

Define Variables

Define the variables in your document

In our sample here, we want to use variable data for the person's name and the City/State. Once the layers are created and named we just tell Photoshop that those layers will be replaced with variable data.

1. Go to Image > Variables > Define.
2. Select one of the layers with content that you'd like to define as a variable. In our case, the name or location layers.
3. Define the type of variable - for the name badges it's Text Replacement but look, oh yeah, there's a lot you can do with this.
4. Define a name for your variable - there are some specific rules but basically, no spaces or special characters. Use all alpha characters and you won't have a problem.
5. click OK.

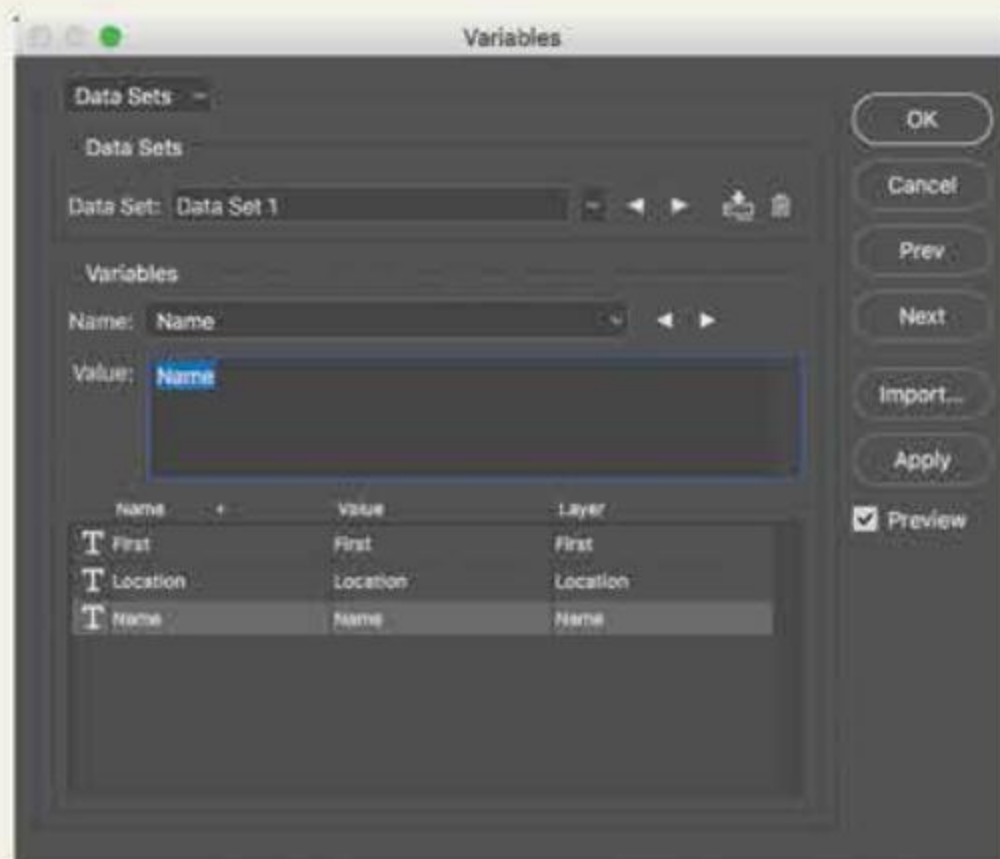


Import Your Data Set

Use the Define Sets dialog to Import your data file. Now that Photoshop is ready to read all the data, we need to import the data file with all the detailed information. Photoshop wants to read a simple text data file. Either a comma-separated (CSV) or tab-delimited file. If you've got the information in an Excel spreadsheet, you can easily save the data as a comma-delimited file.

Make sure you have a column name at the top of each column of data. I like to use single words, no spaces. It just makes things easier. This name should match the name used to define the variable layer in Photoshop.

1. Go to Image > Variables > Data Sets
2. Select Import... and select the data file you created above.



Generate Graphic Files Using Data Sets

Generate your individual files by going to File > Export > Data Sets as Files... Once you've defined the variables and the data sets you can now generate all the individual PSD files.

1. Select File > Export > Data Sets As Files
2. Enter the base name you want for all your files.
3. Select a destination directory for all your files.
4. Choose the data sets to be exported.
5. Click OK

Photoshop will only save PSD files so if you want these images as JPG, or some other format, you'll have to batch process them. That can be done in Photoshop or Lightroom.

Once exported, all your files will be placed in the folder you indicated as individual .psd files.

For more detailed information about this, check your Photoshop User Guide and search for "Create data-driven graphics".



Rob Hull, M.Photos.Cr., CPP, started Great Photography over 20 years ago in Coppell, Texas. In that time, he has offered commercial, portrait, and freelance services to thousands of clients. This year he teams up with Tony Corbell with "Between Light & Shadow" at the 2018 Texas School of Professional Photography.



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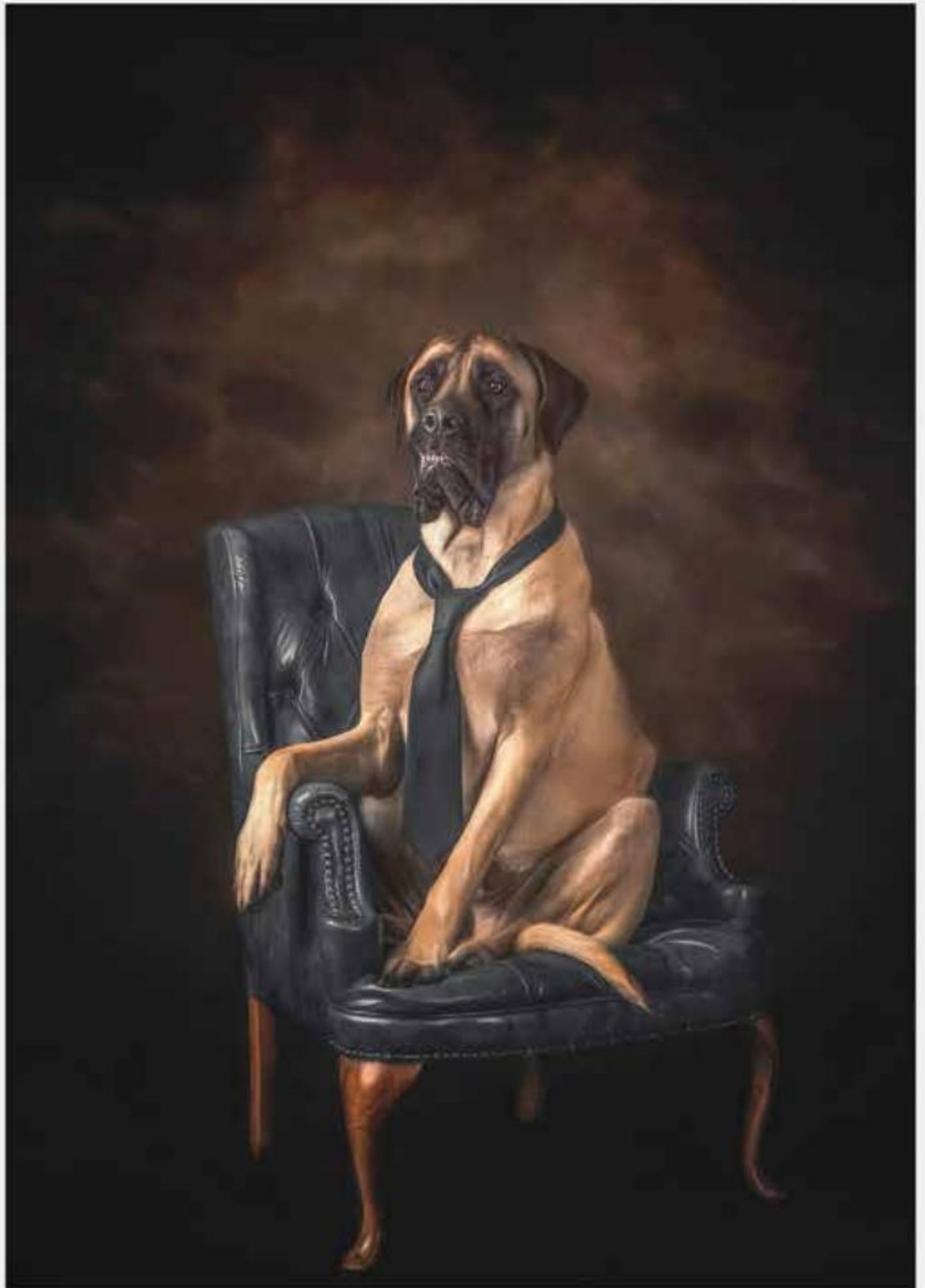


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Spotlight Pics

A gallery of images submitted by members of TPPA and others, Spotlight Pics is a means of sharing great images, ideas, and techniques with fellow photographers. To submit an image, go to ThePhotographerOnline.com or email the Editor: Editor@ThePhotographerOnline.com



“The Executive” was created by Jen Hargrove of Big Piney, Wyoming, while she was teaching at a Super Monday class in May of 2017. Jen used a Nikon D810 and a 70-200mm 2.8 lens. Lighting consisted of a 50 inch Westcott Apollow Soft Box at camera-left for the main light and a 42 inch shoot-through umbrella at camera-right. “We were demonstrating the use of simple props to help with storytelling in a simple image for print competition,” she explains. “The subject is Fynnegan, a four year old English Mastiff who is a regular fixture at our studio. We actually create images of him every few months. I was fortunate that he was focused on the other dogs in the studio and gave that great expression.”



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