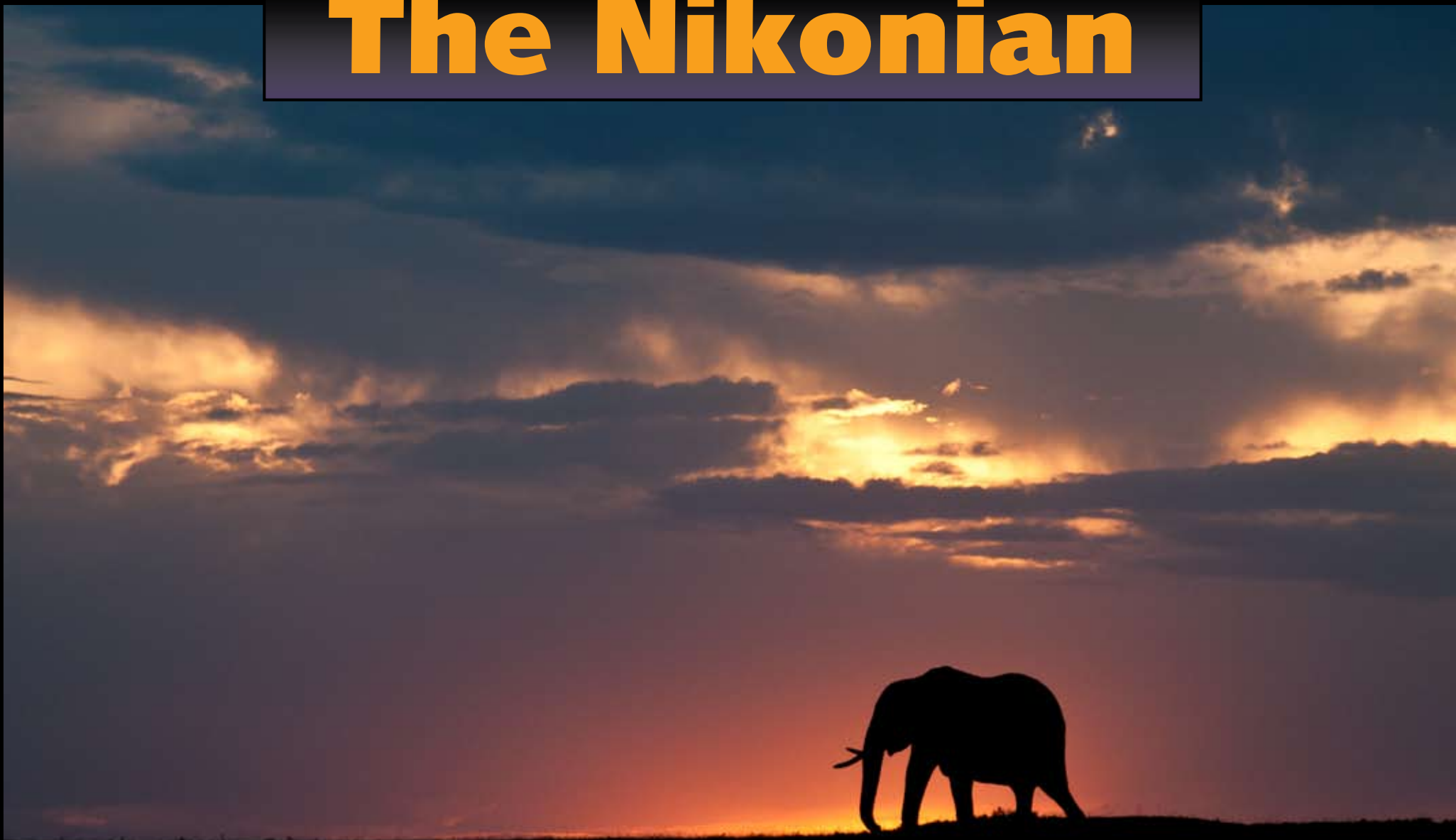


The Nikonian



eZine

51

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ON OUR COVER:

Our cover shot was taken by Nikonians Silver member Daryl Godkin (dgwp) of Manitoba, Canada. Daryl is our grand prize winner in the Best of Nikonians - 2011 Images Photo Contest. His image titled "Elephant at Sunset" came from the Nature submissions and it was taken with his Nikon D300 in Kenya. Details on the image and a listing of our other winners and honorary mentions can be found starting on page 5.

This Page: Nikonian Dennis Owens captured this image during the 11th Annual Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT) in Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks in Utah, USA (October 1-8, 2011). It captures three Nikonians waiting for a Bryce Canyon sunrise. Shown are, from left, Dennis Owens (DennisOwens), Dennis Ducklow (Duke73), and Patrick Buick (profpb). Dennis used his Nikon D3 and a 10.5mm DX Fisheye lens on a Gorilla Tripod for the remote shot. The ISO was 1600, using a 1/3 sec shutter speed and aperture of f/2.8. More images from the 11th ANPAT are featured starting on page 14.

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jrp
Administrator
Charter Member
Co-Founder
30,875 posts

ANPAT site and attendees combine for photo perfection

Our 2011 Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip was elevated to the 11th power this past fall as ANPAT11 covered the grounds of Zion and Bryce Canyons National Parks in Utah.

This area is considered by the best landscape photographers of our time to offer the greatest landscape photography in the world. The American Southwest received us with its unique and diverse land forms, allowing and forcing us all to hone our skills to capture their powerful majesty.

Described as the “perfect combination of adventure, photography, vacation, and camaraderie” this ANPAT11 edition also received accolades from both our loyal ANPAT veterans and new attendees.

Impressions. Some random sample comments:

“The ANPAT 11 trip was an absolute delight. It allowed me to immerse myself in photography and put into practice the many things I have learned during the past two years. I learned by listening to others about what works and what doesn’t work. I call this adventure my personal ‘Rosetta Stone in Photography’ since I felt so totally immersed in putting into practice photographic techniques. I actually felt myself learning everyday and improving everyday. All I can say is thank you to nikonians.org for this experience. I look forward to the next ANPAT.”

“All I can say is, “Thank you Nikonians!”

“My first ANPAT was a great success. I saw scenery like never before, met many great people and learned a lot from our friendly, informal van conversations. Would love to do it all again. I’m so thankful for the Nikonians who made this happen.”

Comfortably distributed ANPAT goers, eight per each 15 seat vehicle, our vans were

so loud with laughter that Rangers stopped us several times with the excuse to check our permits, like this very competent and well armed national park officer we had the pleasure to meet (shown here packing her trusty notepad and Taser gun for unruly Nikonians).

My partner Bo and I returned with the most rewarding feeling of having made this trip another ANPAT success, largely due to the excellent organization by Mike Hagen, our Nikonians Academy Director, credited with managing to get for us a good snowy day for remarkable images.

Equipment. The camera bodies in use at this ANPAT were (in descending order): D300, D700, D7000, D3 and a few D90 and D2x mostly as backups. Most used lenses were the 12-24mm f/4G DX AF-S, 14-24mm f/2.8G AF-S and 24-70mm f/2.8G AF-S.

Tripods were Gitzo in their vast majority, whether Super Gitzo, MAGICA, and plain. Ball heads were mostly Markins M10 and M20.

Special thanks to our corporate partner TAMRON (USA) for arranging the very good presentation of their lens lineup, and providing an opportunity to try them out. Those who did were very pleasantly surprised by the optical qualities of these lenses. The presentation was made even more interesting by professional photographer Ken Hubbard, who showed us his own images made with those lenses and talked about his personal experiences.

Thank you.

Looking forward to ANPAT12

Have a great time!

— J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)



Membership levels

Nikonians offers several levels of membership. Of course there is a free, basic membership good for a trial period, that you can now extend indefinitely depending on interactivity, but we invite you to enjoy the fun and benefits of Silver, Gold and Platinum membership levels providing you with sell & buy opportunities, image upload, free shipping and more. Nikonians is a not-for-profit community. All capital generated through our operations (The Nikonians Community, The PhotoProShop and The Nikonians Academy) are reinvested to sustain our growth. Each membership counts and we take this opportunity to thank you for your support!

Bo Stahlbrandt and J. Ramón Palacios, Founders of Nikonians



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Image gallery
Your personal image gallery with many features.
Participate in photo contests
Participate in the Annual Best of Nikonians Images Photo Contest. Prizes are awarded during the year as well as in the contest finals.
Access to classifieds section
Buy and sell your gear in our Buy and Sell Forums
Access to Nikonians workshops & tours
Access to Nikonians events
Upload and link to images in forums
Rebates and more!



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A membership starts as low as \$25 USD per year or less than 7 cents a day. Join today at www.nikonians.org/membership

Contest Results

The Best of Nikonians - 2011 Images Photo Contest has resulted in a grand prize winner, four category winners, and ten honorary mentions.

Our congratulations go to Grand Prize winner Daryl Godkin (dgwpg), of Manitoba, Canada for his grand prize image titled "Elephant at Sunset." We used a cropped version of his image on our cover, and this is the full version. Daryl tells us the image was the result of fancy driving, numerous exposures and cooperation from Mother Nature.

"This photo was taken in the Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya while on a photo safari with eight other photographers. Our vehicle found this elephant shortly before sunset and followed it until the last rays of the sun disappeared.



The elephant never stopped eating and moving about - which meant wasting a little bit of digital film. We followed the elephant for about 20 minutes with our driver aligning us between the elephant and the setting sun, firing off a few frames and checking for blown highlights until the elephant had moved out of position, then moving the vehicle and repeating the process.

All said and done, I fired off about 300 frames, of which many showed a 2 or 3-legged elephant! Back at the computer, it was just a matter of finding the best 4-legged elephant and sky, applying a slight crop and a small levels adjustment."

Daryl used his Nikon D300 and AF-S NIKKOR 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR lens for the image. By the time this version made it to his memory card he was shooting with an ISO of 400 and a 1/500 sec shutter speed. His aperture was f/5.6 and he is fairly certain he had the VR off.

Contest Results - Grand Honorary Mentions



Darryl's shooting notes tell us he used his Nikon D80, F/11, 3/4 sec, ISO 100, Sigma 10-20mm at 14mm, 3-stop GND and Post-processing in Topaz Adjust. The location was Silver Point, Oregon. "To get down low enough to have part of the background rocks in reflection, I had my tripod legs almost horizontal, with the center column jammed into the sand."

Two members earned Honorary Mentions in the Grand Winner category. Darryl Hodson (skibreeze7) of Oregon, USA was honored for his image titled "Silver Point at Sunset" and Richard Hulbert (rhulbert) earned his Honorary Mention with "Marine building heritage interior."

Richard Hulbert tells us:

In 1930, The Marine Building in Vancouver, Canada was the tallest building in the British Commonwealth. The Interiors are one of the best examples of Art Deco Architecture anywhere. With very limited internal ambient lighting, the challenge was to show the level of detail and original interior colors in a way that would realistically document the roof beams of the main lobby. The photo was taken from the mezzanine using a Nikon D3 with a 14-24mm lens set at 14mm. The almost perfect rectilinearity of the image is a testament to the lens design. The aperture was set to f/11 for a healthy depth of field and the ISO was set to 800.

9 images were auto bracketed at 1EV apart. 5 images were used, each with a 2EV separation for the final HDR. No filters were used so as not to compromise the quality of the lens optics.



I, of course, used a tripod and remote cable release. Using the internal leveling of the D3 was critical in achieving the final image. This image was shot very recently on October 24, 2011.

Contest Results



Our Nature Category winner was Phil Pound (Phil Pound), from Ireland, with his photo titled "Reflection."

His shooting notes tell us it is a "low key photograph of a Black Headed Gull and its reflection."

Metered using Centre Weighted metering pattern with an exposure compensation of -2, I wanted the dark background to remain near black and not to blow the highlights of the bird's feathers. The lens was mounted on a gimbal type head and carbon fibre tripod. The biggest problem to overcome was being patient enough to isolate one bird from the flock, as there were in the region of 100 birds in the pond where this shot was made."

Contest Results



Louis Blair (louis) and Neale Dyster (digitwized) took Honorary Mentions in the Nature Category.

Louis is from Quebec, Canada and he provided "Sand Dune" taken during sunset at Sossusvlei, Namibia.

Neale is from Tasmania, Australia where his image "Wild West Coast" was captured. Neal tells us: "Just outside the mouth of the Arthur River on Tasmania, Australia's wild west coast. The coast here is littered with driftwood, some small pieces and some entire trees. They are washed down the river during storms and smashed onto the beach by the often raging tides in this region." To see "Wild West Coast" go to Neale's [online posting](#).

Michael Bryan (mbryan777) of Oklahoma, USA won the HDR Category with "Sunflowers and Old Wood."

Michael tells us: "This photo is a blend of two exposures, shot with a D300. The barn is located just west of Pawhuska, Oklahoma."



Contest Results



Honorary mentions in the HDR Category were earned by Jay Seeley (jrsee) and Bernhard Seel (btbschwarz).

Jay is from Pennsylvania, USA and his winning image is titled "Sunrise Lake McDonald". Jay tells us it was a five-shot compilation.

Bernhard is from Germany and his HDR photo was gathered in Munich at "Allianz-Arena." His shooting notes describe the arena: *"Near Munich at night with the grow-light installation turned on. Natural light through the roof-opening is not sufficient to keep the grass alive."*



Contest Results



Zoran Buletic (Bzox) of Bosnia & Herzegovina was the Black and White Category winner with his image titled "Frosted Memories." It was taken with his Nikon D200, using no flash, spot metering and an ISO of 200, yielding a 2 second exposure at f/3.5.

Contest Results



Brian Bochenek 2011

Honorary Mentions in the Black and White Category were taken by Brian Bochenek (Statevillain) and Neale Dyster (digitwized).

Brian is from Illinois, USA and his winning shot was taken in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He calls it "The Sweet Sounds of Old San Juan."

This is Neale Dyster's second Honorary Mention this year and once again he used Australia to provide the subject matter. His shot titled "Rocks at Low Head" shows the late afternoon light on rocks at Low Head, Northern Tasmania, Australia.



Contest Results



The winning Challenges Category image titled "On Guard" was provided by Barry Schirm (BSchirm) of California, USA.

Barry tells us his image shows: "An adult and young monkey keep close watch on activity at an abandoned temple in Jaipur, India."

Honorary Mentions in the Challenges Category were earned by Darryl Hodson (skibreeze7) and Mark Morrison (Lunastar). Darryl is also a double winner, this time with his image "LB on BB."



A close look will quickly tell you what the initials LB and BB mean. Darryl's specs show: Nikon D90, F/36, 1/13, sec, ISO 200, Tamron 90mm macro "My intent was to come up with a 'similar pattern' contrast, between the large-sized basketball and the diminutive ladybug."

Contest Results



Mark Morrison's "Rocketing Redhead Drake" was taken with his Nikon D300 using a 1/2000 sec shutter speed and f/5.6 aperture working with an ISO of 500. Mark is from Minnesota, USA.

The winners receive:

Our Grand Prize winner will receive (courtesy of Contest Sponsor [LowePro](#)) a LowePro Pro Roller, LowePro Pro bag, Certificate of Nikonians Achievement, and a one year extension on current membership level.

The Category winners will receive the LowePro Pro bag, Certificate of Nikonians Achievement, and a one year extension on current membership level. Honorary Mention winners will receive Certificates of Nikonians Achievement, and a one year extension on current membership levels.



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ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites

They came, they saw, they conquered. Many shots were fired and not a single animal was injured.

Armed with tons of glass and a photo enthusiast's dream list of Nikon gear, more than 30 Nikonians arrived for the 11th Annual Photo Adventure Trip (ANPAT), at Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks, in Utah, USA.

The ANPAT placed our intrepid adventurers in the midst of a sprawling landscape rich with photo opportunities and from the sampling of images and field notes sent to our publication team we can see a perfect example of Nikonians "doing their thing" — sharing, learning and inspiring — with the added benefit of each other's company for a week.

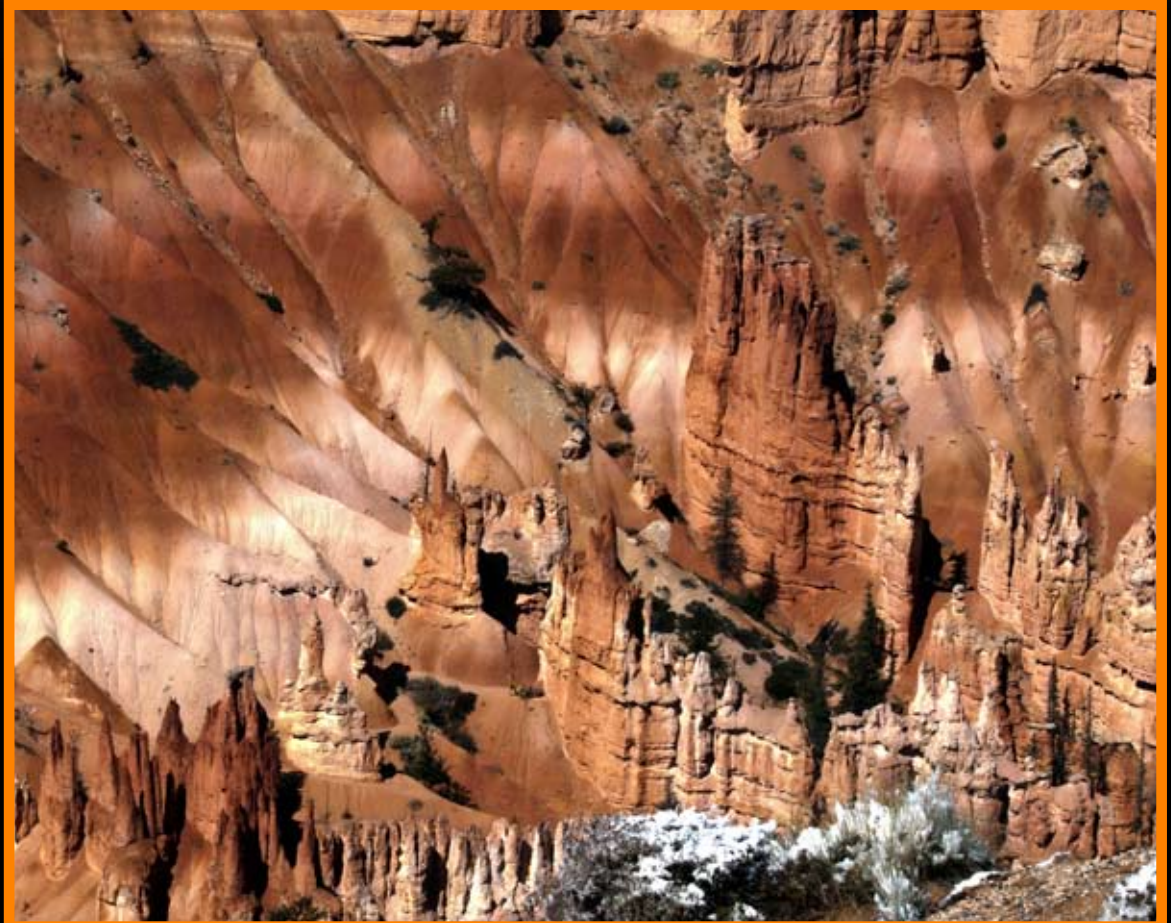
This is just a sampling of images. If you want to see more, check out the [11th ANPAT Gallery pages](#). They are divided into three categories: Friends, Landscapes and Wildlife. Many of the following images can also be found in the Gallery, but in this case we have the added impressions of our photographers. They have provided Field Notes on each shot, explaining their thoughts and impressions while shooting (as well as noting some technical details).

Roger Dean (rdean13)

Field Notes:

Bryce Canyon. Confused by the soil coloration, I kept looking at the sky to see how the sun could create the ribbons of color only to find that it was all soil variation.

Nikon d300; AF-S Nikkor 70-00mm, f/2.8; (70 mm, f:16, 1/200 sec, ISO 400); Tripod Gitzo GT-41T; Ball head: Really Right Stuff BH-25



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Roger Dean (rdean13)

Field Notes:
Cedar Breaks canyon view.
Intrigued by the textures and colors of the canyon, and inspired by the occasional sun breaks through the clouds.
Nikon d300; AF-S Nikkor 12-24mm, f/4; (24 mm, f:11, 1/1000 sec, ISO 400);
Tripod: Gitzo GT-41T; Ball head: Really Right Stuff BH-25.

2011 11th Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip members

1. James Knighten (emi_fiend)
 2. Pete Wilson (Pete_Wilson)
 3. James Eaton (f11)
 4. Lance Levine (llevine)
 5. Gary Poole (gpoole)
 6. Daniel Johnsen (dwj)
 7. James Nichols (JungleJim)
 8. Rick Matheny (RHMJR2)
 9. Roger Wendel (roly_roy)
 10. Ronald Wright (rwwright)
 11. James Judd (jamesjudd)
 12. Larry Anderson (mnbuilder49)
 13. Albert Esschendal (alberte)
 14. John McGarry (jtmcg)
 15. Philip Boggs (photo_phil)
 16. James Gould (jgould2)
 17. Dennis Ducklow (duke73)
 18. Donald Sanborn (donsanborn)
 19. Dennis P. Owens (DennisOwens)
 20. Robert Herald (teltek)
 21. John D. Roach (jdroach)
 22. Patrick Buick (profpb)
 23. Friedrich T Elliott (Fried)
 24. Valerie D. Hughes (ValerieH)
 25. Dana McMaster (danamc)
 26. Roger Dean (rdean13)
 27. Robert L. Lock (orthosurgeon2005)
 28. Steve Johnson (reuben)
 29. Bo Stahlbrandt (bgs)
 30. J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)
 31. Mike Hagen (Mike_Hagen)
- Honorary ANPAT 11 attendee: Ken Hubbard
(TAMRON representative)

ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Jim Nichols (JungleJim)

Field Notes:

North Rim of Grand Canyon shot from the Rim Lodge.

D-700 w/24-70 lens shot at 27mm. ISO 200 F14, 1/100 sec. (Handheld) Impression: Our Van2 voted to go off ANPAT plan and spend the day travelling to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Several of us had been to the South Rim but none had ever been to the North Rim. After a drive of 3+ hours after a morning O'Dark-30 star shooting stop, we were treated to great scenery. Rain was forecast in the afternoon and we watched it fill into the Grand Canyon to the photographic delight of all.

Jim Nichols (JungleJim)

Field Notes:

IR photograph of road through the Kaibob Plateau near North Rim Grand Canyon D-200 IR Converted by Lifepixel, 18-70 lens shot at 18mm, ISO 200 F7, 1/800 (hand held) Impression: I really like the looks of Infrared photos. We had stopped for about an hour to shoot an Aspen tree grove. This picture shows the hillside with the Aspens in the foreground and the darker Evergreen trees in the background. The secret to IR is to know what the scene will look like based on the elements that reflect IR energy (and those that don't) to produce interesting contrast.

ANPAT11 was a great trip to another new destination for me. That's what I really enjoy, going to new places. The added bonus is to do it with friends I've made from 6 (I think) prior ANPAT trips. Couple of highlights this trip was wading up to chest level in The Narrows River area with Steve Johnson using our tripod (with camera mounted) as a walking stick! Going "rouge" and driving to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, the base lodge was so old fashioned, inducing such a nostalgic feeling from the 1920's.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Jim Eaton (f11)

Field Notes:

The first sunrise of ANPAT 11 for van 4 at Zion NP.

Shot just off the road east of the long tunnel.

Latitude: 37,13.39N

Longitude: 112,54.69W

D200 Nikkor 12-24mm f/4 @12mm

1/5s @ f/8 ISO 100 manual exposure

Gitzo GT3540XLS and Markins M10

Under exposed slightly to hold the color in the sky. Learned that from Bo last year at Olympic NP. Processed with ACR 3.3 and Photoshop CS2

Jim Eaton (f11)

Field Notes:

Rock Squirrel poses near the Virgin River.

D200 Nikkor 12-24mm f/4 @24mm

0.4s @ f/20 ISO 100 manual exposure

Gitzo GT3540XLS and Markins M10

Processed with ACR 3.3 and Photoshop CS2

As we are a little short of wildlife this trip, and this little guy posed so still for me, I felt obligated to include him in this waterfall shot. The extra long Gitzo was mandatory for this shot. I was set up on a sharply inclined rock with one leg extended three and a half sections, the second at two, and the third somewhere in between. I leaned against another rock to keep from falling off.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



**Dennis
(Duke73)**

Ducklow

Field Notes:

This is an HDR of two exposures, shot with D700, 24-70, f/22. Dennis Owens, Doc and I got up early on our last day at Bryce to catch some star photos and the sunrise. This is one of the shots. I love the rock near the sunrise that looks like someone kneeling in prayer.

Dennis Ducklow (Duke73)

Field Notes:

25 sec @f/3.2, ISO 1250. D700, 24-70

When our van group did a side trip to the Grand Canyon, we stopped en route to capture the stars. This was one joyful result.

Comment:

My first ANPAT was a great success. I saw scenery like never before, met many great people and learned a lot from our friendly, informal van conversations. Would love to do it all again. I'm so thankful for the Nikonians who made this happen.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Pete Wilson (Pete_Wilson)

Field Notes:

Three shot HDR

Sunrise shot in Zion National park – taken just east of the long tunnel. Zion has such diverse landscape. One section is totally different from another. Found this small puddle of water in a dried up stream to catch the reflection of the first rays of sun on the rock formation.

Shot taken with D300 @ f9 ISO 200 using Nikkor 12-24 f4 lens. Exposures were 1/5, 1/60 and 1/1000 seconds at 8:03 am on Oct 4, 2011.

Pete Wilson (Pete_Wilson)

Field Notes:

Kolab canyon morning.

D7000 using 10.5mm fisheye borrowed from Jim Knighten. Jim is the person on the right side of the photo. Only fitting that he be in the picture since it was his lens. Stopped the lens down to F/20 to get the sun to starburst. ISO 200, 1/100 sec with -1/3 stop exposure compensation. Taken at 10:48 am on Oct 3, 2011.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Gary Poole (gpoole)

Field Notes:

Abstract Art in a Field. While driving along the Kolob Terrace Rd. this steel beam structure in the field between the mountains and us attracted my intention. I have no idea what these beams were part of. Taken at ISO 200 with an 80-200/2.8 AF-S Nikkor at 200mm, f/16, and 1/80 sec.

Gary Poole (gpoole)

Field Notes:

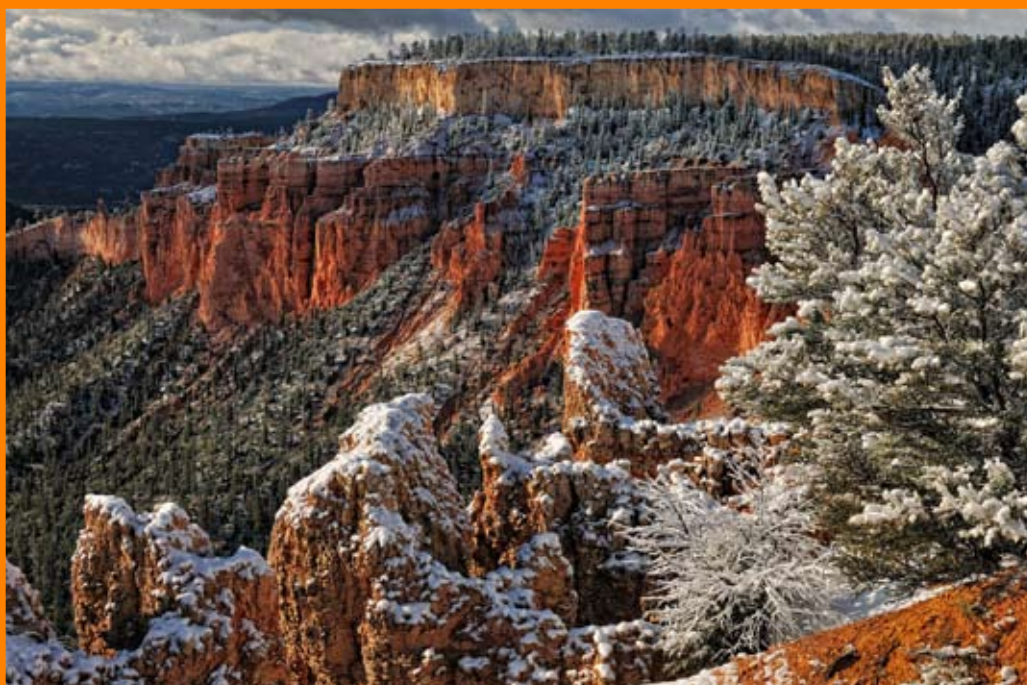
Icicles on a Fence Rail. This image was made at Fairview Point Overlook in Bryce National Park. I was overwhelmed by the magnificence of the scenery of Bryce. While we were there, fresh snow made the scenes almost magical. Wherever you looked, the view was fantastic. I have my share of beautiful landscapes there, but I just needed to do something different. Taken at ISO 200 with an 16-85/2.5-5.6G Nikkor at 78mm f/16. This a 3 image HDR produced with Oloneo Photo Engine. The exposures were 1/250, 1/125, and 1/60 sec.

All photos were taken with a D300 on a Gitzo 3530S tripod with a Markins M10L ballhead and Kirk L-Bracket. My most used lens was my 28-80/2.8 AF-S Nikkor; interestingly none of the photos I've submitted here were taken with that lens. I did all my processing with Capture NX2. For HDR I used the Oloneo Photo Engine: I exported TIFs from NX2, did my merging and tone mapping in Oloneo, saved a TIF that I imported back into NX2 for final adjustment if needed.

Impressions: This was my 5th ANPAT. I started with ANPAT 6 in Smokey Mountain National Park. I made my decision to go to ANPAT 6 because of Pete Wilson's comment that he would go on every ANPAT that he was physically able to attend. I feel the same way, but I did miss ANPAT 8 in Denali because of the cost and the impact of the economic situation on my retirement investments. I enjoy the comradeship of ANPAT and have made many new friends through the experience.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Jim Knighten (emi_fiend)

Field Notes:

Early morning at Paria Point at Bryce Canyon, but well after sunrise.

Settings: D300, 24-70 lens (at a 38mm focal length), ISO 200, 1/640 s, f/11, -1.0 EV compensation and Cloudy white balance.

Comments: Rain & snow the night before gave us the view that the weather would be poor that day. The snow stopped and left an overcast sky which produced vivid colors in the canyon. The view at Paria Point was like a postcard with the snow on the trees and hoodoos. I took this image standing on the paved walkway at the point. My intention was to use the snow on nearby trees and hoodoos as foreground objects and to capture the red cliffs and complimentary green trees in the distance. I shot with the camera at a low angle to minimize the darkly clouded sky. Challenges: Arranging the composition so that the shot was wide, but keeping the guard rail out of the shot was difficult.



Jim Knighten (emi_fiend)

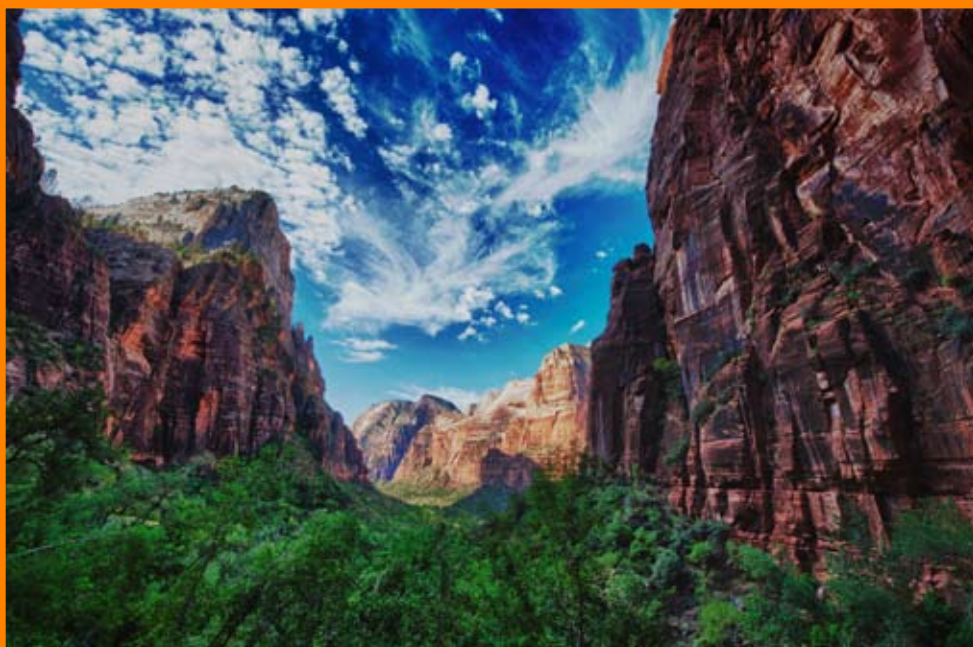
Field Notes:

This is a female Big Horn sheep that I encountered when returning from the Canyon Overlook Trail in Zion National Park. Settings: D300, 70-200VR II + TC-20 III teleconverter (@ 400mm equivalent), ISO 400, 1/125s, f/11, -1.0 EV compensation, Cloudy white balance. Comments: Near the top of the steps to descend to the trailhead, I spotted this sheep across the highway on a high perch and seemingly observing the Zion tunnel traffic. My intention was simply to get an image before she moved. I tried to arrange the composition with the animal high and to the right so that she looked like she may jump farther into the frame. In actuality, she was quite accommodating and remained in position. I cropped the image a little to make the animal larger in the image. Challenges: The mild panic of trying to set up the tripod and get the camera and lens out of the backpack and get a correct exposure before the animal moved left me a little flustered and wondering afterward if I had the lens extended all the way.

TRIP COMMENTS:

I thoroughly enjoyed the ANPAT. It was fun to visit with old friends and make new ones. I always learn a lot from the photographers I meet on these trips. The scenery at our locations was particularly beautiful. I really appreciated the great organization of the week by Mike Hagen. I will certainly try to attend another ANPAT.

ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Mike Hagen (Mike_Hagen)

Field Notes: Zion Valley from the Weeping Rock viewpoint. This fantastic viewpoint in Zion is one of the easiest to get to and only requires a 10 to 15 minute hike. Since the contrast range was so extreme, I bracketing nine different exposures in the camera in preparation for merging later in HDR software. Nine frame HDR processed in Nik HDR Efex Pro and finished in Photoshop CS5. Nikon D700, Nikon 14-24mm f2.8, Gitzo GT3530 tripod and Markins M20 head.

Mike Hagen (Mike_Hagen)

Field Notes:

Bryce Canyon before sunrise after the season's first snowfall. The day before this shot our van groups were driving through rain, sleet and snow. We weren't sure what the weather would be like when we arrived at Bryce Canyon, but we decided to press on anyways. We were pleasantly surprised with blue skies and fresh snow. Seven image HDR processed in Nik HDR Efex Pro, Nik Color Efex Pro 4, and finished in Photoshop CS5. Nikon D700, 14-24mm f2.8, Gitzo GT3530 tripod and Markins M20 head.

Impressions: I had a wonderful time on ANPAT 11. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you by coordinating this trip.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



John D. Roach (jdroach)

Field Notes:

Eastern Panoramic at La Verkin Overlook, Taken with Nikon D90, 10-24mm Tamron Lens, ISO 200, 1/60s, f/11, 8 vertical images at sunset stitched together with PTgui, and adjusted tone, hue, clarity, and Sharpness in Lightroom 3. The challenge was to capture the wide expanse with as much clarity as possible and maintain a good balance between the sky and the vast beauty of southwestern landscape as possible. A carbon fiber Manfrotto tripod and ball head was used with large quick release plate attached to the camera grip

John D. Roach (jdroach)

Bryce Canyon after Snow, Taken with Nikon D90, 18-200mm Nikkor Lens, ISO 200, 1/250s, f/16, bracketed three shot exposure HDR processed in Photomatix Pro and then adjusted tone, exposure, hue, saturation, clarity, and sharpness in Lightroom 3. The challenge was to capture the rich color of the near hoodoos and forest created by some sun peeking through the clouds vs. the contrasting light and dark caused by the also distant partial overcast of fast moving clouds which created strong contrasting light over the landscape. A carbon fiber Manfrotto tripod and ball head was used with large quick release plate attached to the camera grip.

Impressions:

The ANPAT 11 trip was an absolute delight. It allowed me to immerse myself in photography and put into practice the many things I have learned during the past two years. I learned by listening to others about what works and what doesn't work. I call this adventure my personal "Rosetta Stone" in Photography since I felt so totally immersed in putting into practice photographic techniques. I actually felt myself learning everyday and improving every day. All I can say is thank you to Nikonians.org for this experience. I look forward to the next ANPAT.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



John McGarry (jtmcg)

Field Notes:

Towers of the Virgin.

D300, 24-70 f2.8 Nikkor @31mm, 3 frame HDR, f/11 at 1/125s, 1/60s, 1/30s, ISO 200, tripod

This was our first morning at ANPAT and it was a clear day with a few wispy clouds. We were behind the Zion Human History Museum before sunrise. I had taken a few shots before this set concentrating mainly on the Towers and I noticed the wispy cloud formation and wanted to include it. I shot the 3 frames at -1, 0, +1. I checked the histograms and there was no clipping at either end. The 3 frames were processed in HDR Efex Pro and finished in Capture NX2.

John McGarry (jtmcg)

Field Notes:

View from Bristlecone Loop Trail at Rainbow Point D300, 14-24 f2.8 Nikkor@14mm, 3 frame HDR, f/16 at 1/500s, 1/250s, 1/125s, ISO 200, tripod The road to Rainbow Point had been closed on Thursday due to the snow but fortunately was opened on Friday, our last day. Rainbow Point is over 9000 ft and there was still snow at that elevation when we arrived at about 9:30. I started to hike the Bristlecone Loop Trail when I came upon this scene. I liked that there were compositional elements at several different distances. I really liked that the foreground tree still had snow clinging to its branches. I biased the exposure -.3 ev because of the sun on the snow so my bracketing was -1.3, -.3, +.7. As with the previous image, I used manual focus. Processed in HDR Efex Pro and finished in Capture NX2.

Impressions: It was a great trip. We had good weather and it was great to meet other Nikonians and share a week of photography in two places of great natural beauty. I hope to attend future ANPATs.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Rick Matheny (RHMJR2)

Field Notes:

Rain over Grand Canyon. Taken with Nikon D700; 28-70 f/2.8D AFS Zoom Nikkor & 3 stop Singh Ray ND Filter. f/16 @ 1/30th second. I tried to capture the rain falling into the canyon without blowing out the clouds.

Rick Matheny (RHMJR2)

Field Notes:

Over Looking the Mossy Cave Trail. Taken with Nikon 700; 28-70f/2.8D AFS Zoom Nikkor. f/20 @ 1/80th second. I had to climb a steep talus slope to get close enough to capture both the rock formation and the dead tree trunk.

Impressions:

Hiking at the high elevation with a 35lb camera backpack plus tri-pod was the most challenging part of the trip for me – I'm just a kid at 66 years old and an office guy. This was my fourth ANPAT, and as always, the camaraderie of the van is the best part of the trip! Of course, it helps to be in a photographically beautiful place, and with a well-planned itinerary. As in the past three ANPAT's, the days were long, but rewarding. I hope to be able to go on another ANPAT some year.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Albert Esschendal (alberte)

Field Notes:

Waterfall in Zion Canyon photographed using slow shutter speed with the Nikon D3 on ISO 100 and a 5 stops neutral density filters to become dreamy water and sharp rocks. Nikon D3, AF-S 17-35mm f/2.8G lens, f/16 at 1.6 seconds.

Albert Esschendal (alberte)

Field Notes:

Nikonians Steve Johnson (reuben), Jim Nichols (JungleJim) and Rick Matheny (RH-MJR2) having fun at a not scheduled but beautiful side tour "the North Rim of the Grand Canyon". This day was very impressive for a guy of The Netherlands with a highest hill of 1,000 feet back home, now seeing this 5,000 feet deep canyon. Nikon D3, AF-S 17-35mm f/2.8G lens, ISO 200, f/11 at 1/00 sec.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Robert L. Lock, II (orthosurgeon2005)

Field Notes:
Wood Stuck in the Bryce Mud
f /16, 1/6 sec, Lens 105mm Macro,
ISO 100, D3x
SU-800 flash trigger with SB-900 off
camera flash.

Robert L. Lock, II (orthosurgeon2005)

Field Notes:
Hoodoos of Bryce
f /16, 1/125 sec, Lens 80-400 at
100mm, ISO 100, D3x
Image was cropped fairly tight to iso-
late the tops of the Hoodoos
Additional:
All images shot on Manfrotto (non
carbon fiber) heavy tripod with Re-
ally Right Stuff Ball Head—Large
I certainly enjoyed the beautiful pho-
tographic opportunities we experi-
enced each day. I equally enjoyed
the friendship, laughter, and oppor-
tunity to meet fellow photographers
from all over the world. I hope to
attend another ANPAT in the future.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Donald Sanborn (donsanborn)

Field Notes:
Nikon D3S
AF-S 70-200mm f/2.8G VR II
1/45 at f11, 200 mm
It was a wonderful backlit shot after waiting over half an hour for the correct sun

Donald Sanborn (donsanborn)

Field Notes:
Nikon D3S
AF-S Nikkor 24-70/2.8G ED
1/125 at f 8, 24 mm
The 24-70 is an amazing lens wide open



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Lance R. Levine (llevine)

Field Notes:

Zion, Canyon View, absolutely beautiful view. I liked the way Bob looked with the rocks and background as he was capturing the image of the view. Nikon D700, f/10, 1/40 sec. ISO 200. Tripod mounted.

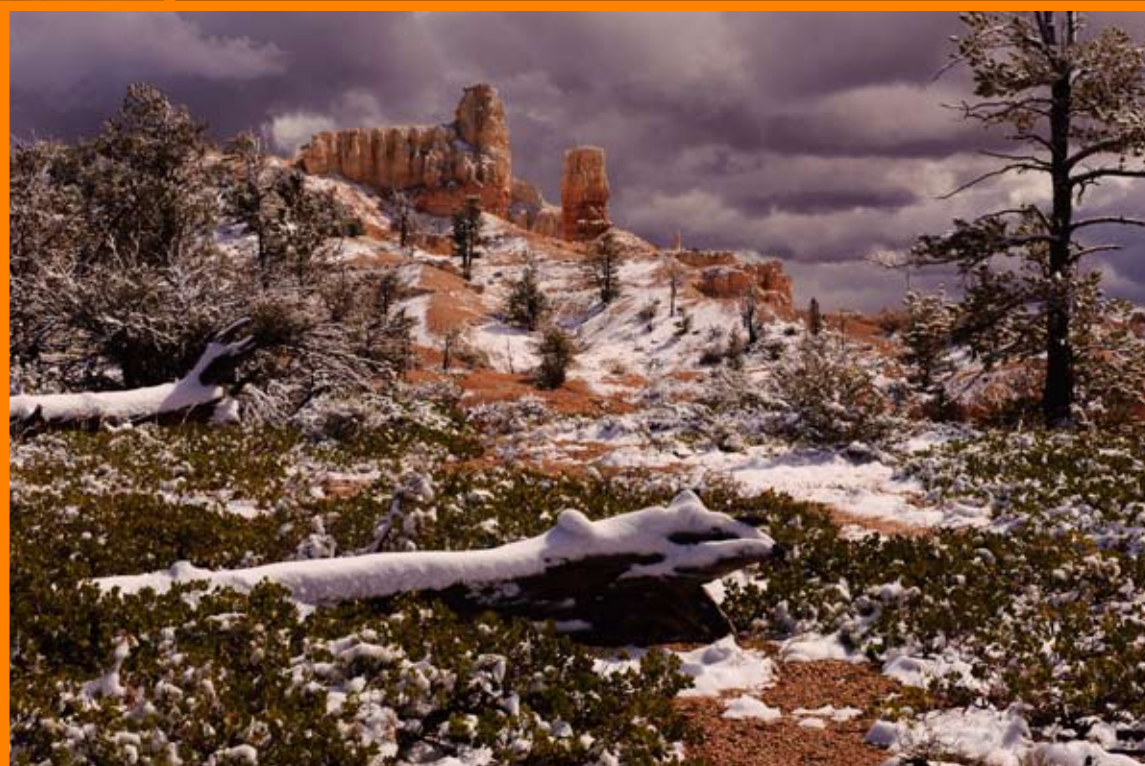
Lance R. Levine (llevine)

Field Notes:

Bryce, Paria View, clouds with character, fresh snow, tried to get something in the foreground to lead into the image. Nikon D700, f/18, 1/40 sec. ISO 200. Tripod mounted.

Impressions:

Anpat11 was a great trip. I took some of the best images ever. The weather cooperated, although the forecast continually concerned us. A Great group of Nikonians who were continually open to sharing their knowledge and experience. I learned a lot and connected with some old friends and made some new ones. Many thanks to JRP, Bo and Mike for all of their efforts in putting this all together.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Friedrich T. Elliott (Fried) and Valerie D Hughes (ValerieH)

Field Notes:

D2Xs @ 280 on 70-200mm f/2.8 with TC1.4. ISO 100 for 1/100 sec @ f/5.0.

Collard Lizard in residence on the South Fork off Taylor Creek in the Kolob Canyons, Zion National Park.

This stump had caught our attention as a potential texture study. On the way back, we noticed the lizard and spent several minutes photographing from different angles and compositions. This image has been rotated 90 degrees from the original.



Friedrich T. Elliott (Fried) and Valerie D Hughes (ValerieH)

Field Notes:

D2Xs @20mm on 12-24mm f/4 with variable neutral density filter. ISO 100 for 1/20 sec at f/22.

Aspens on creek west of Duck Creek, UT on SH14.

Snowing and cold! This was Valerie's favorite "found" location of the trip.

Comment: The ANPAT is the perfect combination of adventure, photography, vacation, and camaraderie.

ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



Dennis Owens (DennisOwens)

Field Notes:

One of our Nikonians Don Sanborn (donsanborn), knee deep in the Narrows in Zion National Park Utah. I shot this with my remote D3 on a gorilla tripod only one inch above the fast moving river and I set it to a slower shutter speed to capture the water at a faster speed. ISO 200, Shutter speed=0.8 at f/22 with a Nikon D3 and a 10.5mm DX Fisheye lens.

Dennis Owens (DennisOwens)

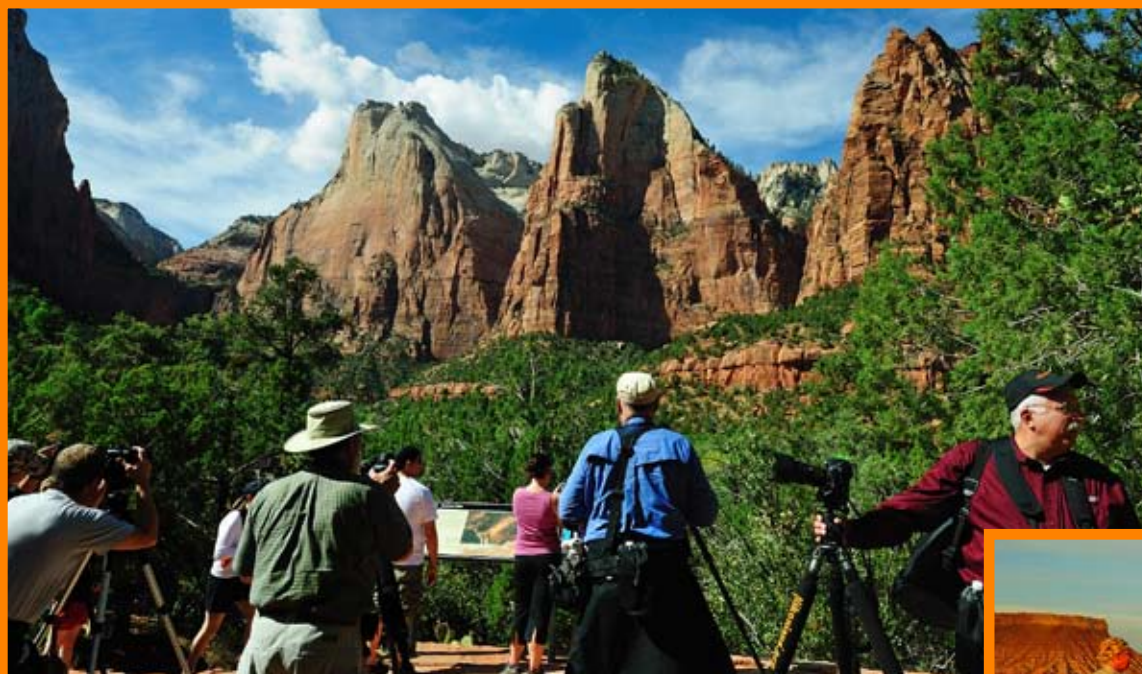
Field Notes:

The pure delight of just being here at the ANPAT. It is a photo of our beloved Dr. Patrick Buick (profpb), better known as "the Doc." This photo is nothing spectacular in the art of photography, but in the art of portraiture, I do not think that I could have come up with that shot that said, I love ANPAT! As I have with this shot. Taken at ISO 400 as a jpg and not rendered in any way. 1/200 shutter speed, f/2.8 with a 24-70mm lens.

Comment: I think that most of the images you will be receiving will be mostly great landscapes. However, as a people and portrait mainly photographer, I like to see the folks behind the camera. All the best and Good Light.



ANPAT-11 Gallery favorites



J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)

Field Notes:
Nikonians waiting for the sunset after-glow
Camera: Nikon D700 w/MB-D10, Lens & Filters: 14-24MM
F/2.8G AF-S, Aperture: F/20, Shutter speed: 1/20s.

J. Ramón Palacios (jrp)

Field Notes:
Nikonians at the Three Patriarchs (Van 1)
Camera: Nikon D700 w/MB-D10, Lens & Filters: 12-24mm f/2.8G
AF-S @ 24mm, ISO: 200, Aperture: f/18, Shutter speed: 1/250



Manual Vs Automatic Exposure: AE Lock provides Third Alternative



Ed Erkes (EdErkes13), a long-time Nikon user, has been interested in the outdoors and nature all his life and has been photographing nature's wonders since 1982. Although strictly an amateur photographer, he has had images published in National Wildlife, Southern Living, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Wildlife in North Carolina, Birds and Blooms, Nature Photographer, Bluebird, as well as other regional and local newspapers and magazines. Ed recently moved onto 25 acres of land in Seven Springs, NC that he is currently landscaping to attract wildlife. He spent the past spring photographing wood ducks on his backyard pond.

Over the years there has been a lot of discussion on internet nature photography forums about whether it is better to use manual or automatic exposure modes when photographing wildlife. Successfully capturing interesting and artistic images of a subject that just won't stay in one place has always been a challenge for me. Proper exposure determination of a moving subject against backgrounds of varying tonality and/or in changing light conditions is an initial critical challenge in the whole process.

Although this article addresses exposure determination for wildlife photography, the discussion is really applicable to any type of action photography. I'll briefly review the merits of automatic and manual exposure modes and then describe a method of automatic exposure lock that I have been using since about 1993—when I modified my Nikon F4 to allow the exposure lock button to remain in the depressed position until manually released. I used this method until I retired my F4 in 2004 and switched to digital cameras. I started using automatic exposure lock again in early 2008 when, after reading the instruction manual for my new Nikon D300, I realized that I could program the camera to remain in exposure lock status until the exposure lock button was pressed a second time. I believe that this method can be used on all current Nikon DSLRs.

Automatic Exposure Lock, as I use it, provides the key feature that makes manual exposure so useful: the ability for the photographer to set an exposure that the camera cannot override or change as it continually re-interprets the light reaching the meter. The method also offers some distinct advantages over manual exposure. I was prompted to describe this method after reading John Gerlach's May 2011 newsletter:

http://www.gerlachnaturephoto.com/AnnualLetter/2011_May_Newsletter.html

In it, he expresses his wish for cameras to have an exposure lock button for manual exposure mode:

"Once we have determined our exposure manually, we would like a way to lock the exposure combination we have set. Then we could quickly change the shutter speed or aperture and the camera could change the other one for us. We know the camera does this in automatic, but then we have to deal with all of the shortfalls that autoexposure entails such as changing background reflectances. It would be helpful to have a button on the camera to lock the manual exposure combination and then unlock it with a second push of the button."

I agree that a manual exposure lock button would be useful. However, automatic exposure lock can provide essentially the same benefits.



Nikon F4 with custom-made acrylic mold in place on exposure lock button. A small rotation of the screw would hold exposure lock button in depressed position.

Discussion of Automatic and Manual Exposure Modes

Casual shooters and newcomers to photography often use only automatic modes. They are generally more than willing to have the camera help them with exposure determination. Experienced photographers tend to use manual exposure more often. Some photographers even forego automatic modes altogether and use only manual exposure. The truth is there are advantages and disadvantages to each method and there are times when each can be useful.

Using Automatic Exposure Lock

In automatic exposure modes, the camera meter evaluates the amount and pattern of light falling on the meter and sets either shutter speed, aperture, or both to what the camera calculates is the correct exposure. The experienced photographer generally avoids program modes and uses either aperture or shutter priority in order to retain control over the actual aperture or shutter speed used.

Depending on the subject and the overall tonality of the area metered, the camera's recommended exposure may be correct or require knowledgeable compensation (using the exposure compensation dial). Compared to the days of film, digital cameras make correct exposure easy to determine. Just check the exposure histogram after making an initial exposure. Adjustments can then be made to the exposure, if incorrect. The instant feedback provided by the histogram makes learning exposure methods much easier than in the past.

Automatic exposure is most useful in rapidly changing light conditions, such as the passing of clouds across the sun or the movement of a subject in and out of shadows. In these situations the camera meter will automatically adjust the exposure as the light intensity changes.

The problem with automatic exposure is that, as the photographer focuses the camera on different areas around him, the camera continuously meters the scenes and sets a new exposure whenever the light reaching the meter varies. When the difference in exposure is due to changes in light intensity, then the camera is making the right adjustments. However, if the variation is due to changes in the tonality of the scene, then the camera may well be making incorrect adjustments. A good example of the latter situation would be a bird in flight that, as it rises, shifts from a background of dark green vegetation to a bright-sky background. The result will be some improperly exposed images of the subject since the same amount of light is illuminating the subject, yet the exposure will change significantly due to dramatic differences in background brightness.

With manual exposure, once the exposure settings (aperture and shutter speed) are made, they will not change unless the photographer makes a conscious decision to do so. As with automatic exposure, the initial exposure is generally determined using the camera's recommended exposure as a guide. The photographer either accepts the recommendation or makes desired adjustments to aperture or shutter speed. Viewing the exposure histogram of initial exposures allows the fine-tuning of exposure.

For those who do not use manual exposure often, John Gerlach's "Manual Metering Strategies" http://gerlachnaturephoto.com/Articles/Manual_Metering_Strategies.pdf provides a more thorough review of manual exposure.

Manual exposure is at its best in situations where light intensity is relatively constant yet the subject is moving through a scene of changing tonalities. With the bird in flight moving from dark to light background (discussed above), manual mode would ensure proper exposure of the subject. The problem is that in conditions of changing lighting intensity, the manual method will not adjust exposure to compensate. The photographer must constantly evaluate light intensity and manually make exposure adjustments when the light level changes. When light intensity is changing fairly quickly, the adjustments can be cumbersome and possibly not quick enough for the situation. When you add the additional desire to make creative changes to depth of field or shutter speed as the light intensity is also quickly changing, the adjustments get even more difficult and complicated.



This robin was feeding on earthworms that I tossed onto my front lawn. The bird would retrieve one or several worms, walk/hop across the lawn to the base of a dogwood tree, and then fly up to its nest. The afternoon sun was shining through trees and some areas of the lawn received full sun while other areas were partially lit

or in full shade. One moment the robin would be in full sun and the next in full shade. This type of situation is best handled with an automatic exposure mode. By using matrix metering and fill flash, I was able to concentrate on focus and composition without worrying constantly about estimating lighting changes and manually making exposure adjustments. All images were satisfactorily exposed, with exposures varying by as much as 1 1/3 stops.

Using Automatic Exposure Lock



Manual exposure mode was ideal for this situation: constant light intensity but backgrounds that varied from dark to very bright tones.

To summarize: Manual exposure will ensure consistent exposures in conditions of unchanging light intensity. Automatic exposure will provide faster, automatic adjustment of the exposure when light intensity is changing fairly quickly. However, in automatic exposure, the camera meter does not know if the differences in the amount of light reaching the meter are due to changes in light intensity or to changes in overall tonality of the scene. And of course the situation could be further complicated by a combination of the two factors, i.e. light intensity and tonality changing at the same time.

Let us consider a hypothetical situation where the light intensity is constant and scene tonality does not change during the entire shoot. In this ideal situation either manual or automatic exposure modes will work just fine. Proper exposure can easily be determined by either method, and the exposure will not change since light and tonality do not change. In this hypothetical situation, does one mode offer any advantages over the other? I can't think of any real advantage for manual exposure.

Automatic exposure, however, does have a distinct advantage. If the photographer makes the creative decision to change either the aperture or shutter speed, automatic modes will be faster because exposure variables (aperture and shutter speed) are linked. A change in one will automatically result in a change in the other to maintain the exposure. For example, let's suppose we are photographing a wood duck on a pond and a second wood duck briefly enters the frame. You decide to change the aperture from f5.6 to 11 to get more depth of field. In aperture priority mode, the change in aperture is made by rotating a single dial and the shutter speed is automatically adjusted. To do the same in manual mode requires adjustment of two dials-- a 2-stop change in aperture in one direction and a two stop change in shutter speed in the opposite direction. And you have to count the clicks of the dial to make sure you are adjusting each the same amount. If you don't, the exposure will be wrong.

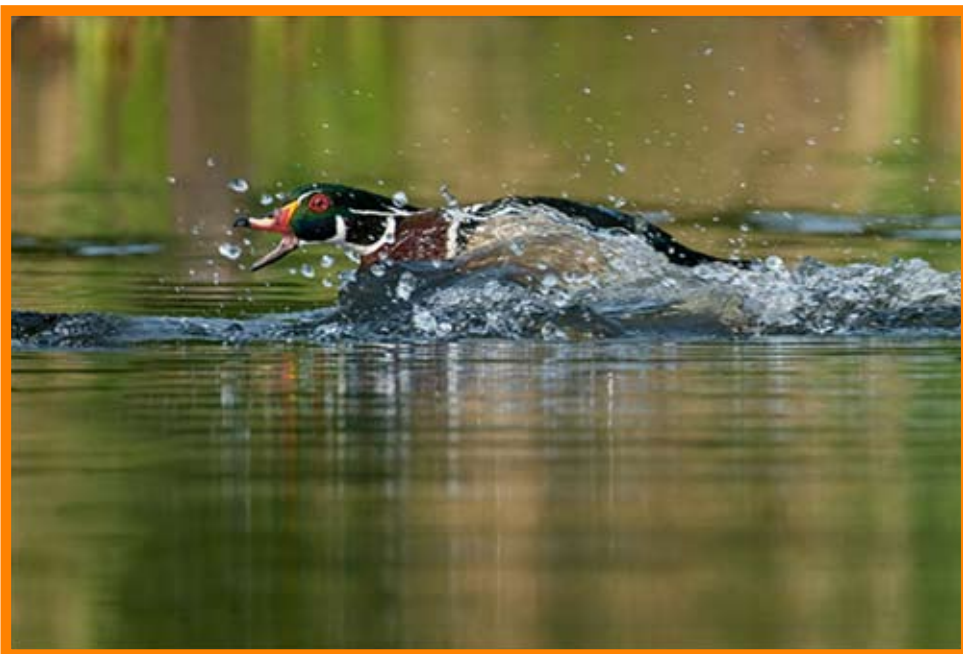
To continue the scenario, when the second wood duck leaves you can, in aperture priority mode, more quickly adjust back to the original aperture to throw the background into more pleasing soft focus. Because shutter speed is linked to aperture, you can also easily make quick changes in shutter speed by adjusting only the aperture. Using the wood duck example again, suppose you are shooting in aperture priority at 1/250s at f8, and the wood duck suddenly shakes his head, stretches his neck, gives a winnowing call. Realizing the duck is about to take flight, you can quickly adjust aperture to maximum, say f4 and 1/1000s and be ready for the shot. Manual exposure would require a 2-stop adjustment of aperture in one direction and a 2-stop adjustment in shutter speed in the opposite direction.

Unfortunately the hypothetical scenario above does not happen often enough. Usually either the light intensity or scene tonality is changing. But the scenario does illustrate a couple of important points. First, both methods can easily be used to obtain an accurate exposure. And, second, automatic exposure has a significant advantage in speed. In fact, for the photographer knowledgeable about exposure, speed of exposure adjustment is its only real advantage. Unfortunately, in the real world, automatic modes also have a really big disadvantage compared to manual exposure. Tonalities often do significantly change as one pans the camera to different areas or zooms toward or away from a wildlife subject. It is a big enough disadvantage that many serious photographers will switch to manual mode when light levels are relatively constant. Manual mode's big advantage over automatic exposure is that it is not affected by changes in scene tonality. The photographer does not have to worry about the camera making incorrect adjustments to exposure due to changes in tonality.

Using Automatic Exposure Lock

Once set manually, the exposure will be correct until the light intensity changes.

Automatic Exposure Lock provides the major benefit of manual exposure--the ability to set an exposure that the camera cannot override--yet retains the ease of quick adjustments via the linked exposure variables (aperture and shutter speed) of automatic modes.



A second drake approached too closely to this one's mate. The drake stretched his neck and made jabbing motions toward the intruder. Anticipating a chase, the use of aperture priority mode allowed a quick change of aperture from f11 to f5.6 to gain enough shutter speed to freeze the action. Since light intensity was fairly constant, I was also in automatic exposure lock at the time. The locked exposure ensured consistent exposures as the rushing duck passed through water reflecting background vegetation that varied from light brown to light and dark green.

D300 Automatic Exposure Lock Method

The discussion that follows refers to specific custom menu settings on the D300. It is my understanding that all current Nikon DSLRS have similar menu settings to allow a

retained automatic exposure lock. The actual custom menu numbers may differ on the various models, but the menu choices will be similar.

To use automatic exposure lock as a replacement for manual mode, you need to properly set three custom functions.

1. Set custom function b4, Easy Exposure Compensation, to ON. Easy Exposure Compensation eliminates the need to press the +/- button when dialing in exposure compensation. I believe that the use of Easy Exposure Compensation is critical to the method. The real advantage of automatic exposure lock over manual exposure mode is the ability to make quick exposure changes using a single dial. If Easy Exposure Compensation is not enabled, then exposure compensation is slowed and made more cumbersome by the need to press the +/- button while rotating the dial.
2. Set custom function f4, Assign FUNC Button, to AE Lock (Hold). At this setting, once pressed, the exposure will remain locked until pressed again or the exposure meter turns off.
 - Alternatively the D300 preview button or AE-L/AF-L button (custom functions f5 and f6) could be programmed to serve as the exposure lock button.
3. Set custom function c2, Auto Meter-Off Delay, to No Limit. This setting keeps the camera meter active or in awake status. As noted above in 1), if the exposure meter does not turn off, then the exposure lock button will remain locked until pressed again (or the camera is turned off).
 - Obviously this means the camera is continually using battery power, but I have not found that to be a problem in daily use. With the type of photography that I do, I have never had a fresh battery fail to last through a day's shooting. Now I don't often travel to photo hot spots and shoot fast and furious all day. I also turn the camera off when not shooting for a period, and always have an extra battery ready for use.

In my photography I generally shoot in aperture priority mode. I change the aperture with the front subcommand dial and dial in exposure compensation with the rear command dial. I use normal aperture priority mode about 40% of the time. I use aperture priority with automatic exposure lock about 60% (these are very rough estimates). I prefer to use automatic exposure lock whenever possible--when light intensity is relatively constant. One advantage of the automatic exposure lock method over switching to manual exposure is the fact that the front and rear command dials always retain the same functions. I am always shooting the same way— using the dials the same--but I now also have the ability to set or “lock” the exposure just like in manual mode.

Using Automatic Exposure Lock

Here's my approach when using automatic exposure lock:

1. I meter the subject or a similar-toned scene and lock the exposure by pressing the FUNC button. While locked, "AE-L" will be displayed on the viewfinder LCD.
Note: the exposure remains locked during steps 2) and 3).
2. I make a test exposure and review the histogram to see if the image was overexposed or underexposed. I use the exposure compensation dial to adjust the exposure to capture maximum image data without clipping important highlight detail. Knowledge of your camera's histogram scale will aid exposure adjustment. By noting where the leading highlight edge lies on the scale, I can pretty closely estimate the amount of exposure compensation needed. (See Determining Exposure: Understanding the Histogram below)
3. If the light intensity changes during the shoot I simply change the exposure compensation. Sometimes I make another test exposure when I think the light has changed. Other times I don't realize that the light has changed until I check the histogram of my most recent image.
4. To return to normal aperture priority mode, press the FUNC button to exit AE Lock status and then re-zero the exposure compensation dial.

Determining Exposure: Understanding the histogram:

Proper exposure ensures that your camera sensor captures the maximum amount of image data. In photography data is equal to light. Up to the point of overloading a photosite, the more light you have reaching the sensor the more data available for tonal range and color fidelity. More image data also gives you more image-editing headroom to prevent posterization and loss of detail. If you underexpose an image by one stop, you've really only captured about half the data that you could have. So you want to "expose to the right" as much as possible without clipping any important highlight detail. To gain a better understanding of how your camera sensor responds to light, I recommend doing some test exposures. The test exposures I describe below are a modification of recommendations by Bruce Barnbaum in *The Art of Photography*. John Gerlach also discusses similar test exposures in his "Manual Metering Strategies".

- I made test exposures of a gray card and a white card on a black velvet cloth background.
- I spot metered the white card and started my exposure sequence at six stops of underexposure, making exposures at 1/3 stop intervals all the way to six stops of overexposure.

Looking at the image histograms, you'll see three peaks of data emerge on the left side of the histogram, travel across the histogram and exit toward the right.

You can get an idea of the dynamic range of your sensor by calculating the number of stops it takes for a peak of data to go from the left to the right wall of the histogram. By observing the three peaks you can gain some insight into the relationship and separation of highlight, midtone and shadow detail. Notice also how the peaks of data change in size and separation as they cross the histogram. More importantly, you can learn the scale of your camera's histogram. My D300 histogram is divided into 4 segments by the left and right walls of the histogram and three vertical lines in between. Knowing that the width across each of the right two segments equals about 1 2/3 stops of light makes it easier to determine the amount of exposure compensation needed after initial test exposures. For example, I know that if my important highlight detail is on the vertical line between the right two segments, I can add 1 1/3 (possibly 1 2/3) stops of exposure without clipping the highlight detail.



D300 LCD Monitor views of histograms: Test image of gray card, white card, and black velvet.

Summary

The first SLR cameras had no internal light meters at all. Aperture and shutter speed were manually set to some predetermined exposure. Later internal light meters were added that allowed manual match-needle metering as the aperture and shutter speed were set manually. In the 1960's automatic exposure modes became available on SLR cameras –where the camera would set one exposure variable (aperture or shutter speed) after photographer selected the other. This increased speed and flexibility in camera operation were welcomed by most photographers, but the advancement did

Using Automatic Exposure Lock

come at a cost: giving up some exposure decision-making to the camera. And despite improvements in metering and exposure algorithms, cameras still often make the wrong decision. Manual exposure enables the photographer to remain in control of exposure. It prevents the camera from taking over and changing the exposure set by the photographer. I recommend using Automatic Exposure Lock over manual exposure because:

1. Automatic Exposure Lock provides the same key benefit of manual exposure--the ability to set an exposure that the camera cannot override --yet it retains the speed and flexibility provided by automatic exposure modes. Aperture and shutter speed remain linked. When the photographer selects one, the camera automatically selects the other to maintain the same exposure.
2. The third exposure variable, ISO, is also linked in AE Lock. In aperture priority mode, a change in ISO will change the shutter speed to maintain the locked exposure. Similarly, in shutter priority mode, a change in ISO will result in a change in aperture to maintain exposure.
3. The use of AE Lock keeps photography simpler. One doesn't have to worry about switching exposure modes or using camera dials differently. I work in aperture priority mode at least 98% of the time. Instead of having to switch over to manual mode to "lock" exposure, I simply press the exposure lock button. Keeping things simple helps me avoid making mistakes in the heat of the moment of fast action. I think this advantage is particularly important to the serious amateur (such as myself) who photographs sporadically – usually on week-ends, more or less frequently at certain times of the year, with occasional lay-offs of several weeks.
4. Automatic exposure modes also enable you to be always ready for sudden photographic opportunities. At the start and end of every shoot, I try to make sure my camera is in aperture priority mode, exposure compensation zeroed, with matrix metering and ISO 400 selected. Whether my camera is slung over my shoulder or on a pillow on the passenger seat of my car, these camera settings allow the opportunity to get an image by quickly bringing the camera to my eye and shooting. In manual exposure mode, you would have to adjust aperture and shutter speed to null the meter before shooting.
5. An additional minor benefit of AE Lock is that, just like manual exposure, it eliminates the problem of bright ambient light entering the viewfinder and affecting exposure. If I'm doing close-up photography with a tripod and electronic release, I press the exposure lock button to lock the exposure. I don't have to cover the eyepiece or switch to manual mode.

One potential drawback to the use of AE Lock is the continual battery drain that occurs while the camera is turned on. I haven't found it to be a problem in my photography. Another potential disadvantage is the fact that you have to assign one of your programmable buttons to AE Lock, thus precluding that button's use for another function.



Wood ducks are difficult to expose because they contain both very light and very dark tones. I exposed as far to the right as possible (without clipping the whites) in order to capture as much data in the dark tones as I could. Since the lighting was early morning full sun, I also used AE Lock. It ensured the subject exposure would stay the same (keeping my subject highlight and dark tones right where I wanted them) as the drake swam through areas of light and dark reflections. Had I used aperture priority and matrix metering, some images would have had blown highlights while others would have recorded significantly less data in the dark tones than they could have. Using AE Lock rather than manual mode also enabled me to more quickly make changes to depth of field or shutter speed if the need suddenly arose.

Megalopolis Backpack Review

by Hendric Schneider (Hendric)



You may survive the rough trip-but what about your camera?

Hendric Schneider is our Mass Media and Communications Director.

He leads the Nikonians team at the headquarters in Huefingen, Germany.

As one of his main responsibilities in the field of Mass Media and Communications, he works closely with our corporate partners in Europe and North America.

If you are an extreme sports enthusiast, you will find almost every gear toting accessory suited for your particular passion. One of most common of these accessories is the standard backpack, the ergonomically perfect carrying device dating back through history to when a few enterprising individuals first realized strapping your possessions on your back was an easy way to carry a load while keeping your hands free to handle walking sticks, spears and clubs.

It didn't take long to modify these backpacks, adjusting the size of shoulder and adding padding to reduce contact point pains along the shoulder and back. The truly modern evolution of the backpack came when someone finally realized the design of a pack can also be influenced by the particular material or equipment being carried.

Thus began the highly specialized branch of backpack design and manufacture specifically tailored for particular applications plus the gear needed for those endeavors.



Soldiers needed packs to carry personal belongings, rations and weaponry. Hikers needed lightweight materials and heavy load carrying adaptations. Photographers needed specific extra padding to protect valuable and sensitive equipment.

But what happens when you are looking to mix applications?



In my case, I'm an enthusiastic digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) photographer with a Nikon camera and a few lenses who happens to be a lover of extreme sports like snowboarding and off-road biking. If I want to travel to a specific location and take pictures a photographer's backpack is fine. But what happens when I want to "travel rough?" What happens if I want to combine snowboarding or biking plus do some photography along the way?

In most cases you have to choose either going out taking photos or going out on an extreme ride, to avoid damage to valuable gear. Last year at Los Angeles, California, I met the guys from [Boblbee](#) who showed me it was now possible to combine those two choices.

During our conversation, I mentioned that I'm a passionate snowboarder and that I avoid taking my DSLR with me to prevent it from damage. As a result they suggested I try the Megalopolis backpack matched to their Internal Cargo Camera Insert.

This Boblbee backpack features an injection-molded one piece (monocoque technology) ABS plastic hard shell with a back protector. To open the backpack you simply remove a soft cover, attached by a rubber strap. Both are made of high quality materials designed to protect your valuable gear, even in heavy rain conditions. The system had originally been developed for motor bikers. It has since been rigorously tested by bicyclists, skiers, snowboarders and skaters. I ordered the optional cargo net to attach my snow boots or my snowboard outside and also added the Lumbar Cassette. The Lumbar Cassette is an additional attachment bag attaching to the bottom of the pack which dramatically increases the total transport volume, while comfortably cradling it in the area surrounding the small of your back and waistline.

Megalopolis Backpack Review

Everything arrived well packed a few days after my order. For a DSLR they offer two sizes of cargo bag. The Cargo Medium is good for a D60, D90, D5100 and other similar cameras plus two lenses (one mounted on the body and one next to it). While you are

using the DSLR insert there still is enough space to handle a rain jacket and a small lunch. It appears to be very small at first, but I found it had plenty of space for my needs. The Cargo Large is good for everything already mentioned plus an additional lens or accessories such as gear flash units, cables and chargers. For my tests I used the medium most of the time, carrying a Nikon D60 (with AF Zoom-NIKKOR 70-300mm f/4-5.6G lens mounted) and an AF-S DX Zoom-NIKKOR 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G ED II lens unmounted.



On average, a regular review test on a product like this should take a few weeks. For me this was impossible since I wanted to test the backpack in the snow as well as being out with the bike. At the end, my test went one year long.

Going out with the bike:

As mentioned before, the backpack was originally conceived with motor bikers in mind, so I wasn't surprised when I felt like it was made specifically for me. I am six and a half feet tall which often presents me with fitting problems. Not here. The straps easily fit me well, and they are obviously capable of handling any body types comfortably. Also the weight of the backpack, filled up with my gear and some clothes, felt very comfortable and suitable.

For my first biking trip I decided not to go too far. In a nearby canyon called Gauchachschlucht I found perfect conditions. This canyon is very good for hikers



and according to www.hikr.org it is rated as the only hiking path with high alpine conditions in southwest Germany. It tends to be very dangerous in some spots for bikers but in my case that means it would be great for testing under rigorous conditions. After all, the purpose of the test was to see how well it would protect my camera gear while also being comfortable enough to wear on a bumpy ride with having rocks on one side and a long way down on the other side.

The experience was awesome. The backpack felt very good and comfortable even after hours. I was able to get great shots and never had worries about the safety of my gear. If you ever come to southwest Germany, don't hesitate to contact me. It will be my pleasure to guide you through this canyon.

During the summer I made several other tests, like going out with the bike in heavy rain or participating at a mountain bike downhill race. To be honest, at the beginning sometimes I did not pack the camera in the backpack. The challenges of bike racing can be extreme and I was hesitant to pack the camera while still testing the backpack for fit, comfort ergonomics and movement restraints. That hesitation went away after a few months. With each new bike event I became increasingly confident that nothing would happen to my gear in case of an accident.

The camera and lenses joined me on my bike trips and eventually got the torture test. At the end of summer last year I had two major accidents. One was at a regular bike tour due to my speaking to my girlfriend instead of watching the streets. As a result I missed the path and started sliding sideways down the hill. Luckily it was not too deep and I was able to separate myself from the bike. The separation was successful with but I walked away with a bruised red leg after it had taken a strong hit from my handlebars. Another one happened going downhill in Ischgl, Austria. Just a few minutes away from my hotel in Austria I missed the path and crashed on a batch of loose rocks. This time I wasn't able to separate from the bike. This resulted in a slide of a few yards, a scratched knee and shorts, a very dirty shirt, and some blue stains. The bottom line for the purpose of my test: in both cases nothing happened to my gear.

My testing continued through the summer and fall with the biking, leading up to the main event. Park the bike and grab the snowboard. The challenge: Take your DSLR with you on the snowboard without the risk of damage. Now it was time to find out of my friends at Boblbee had advised me well. I realized from the start that it is impossible to reduce the risk of damage to zero in winter conditions.

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My first trips went out to France (Chamrousse <http://www.chamrousse.com/>) and Switzerland (Flims Laax <http://www.laax.ch>). In France I simply checked if it is possible to go snowboarding with this kind of backpack. As with the bike it felt very comfortable and made me feel protected. Unlike the summer testing, the challenge now was wearing it on warm and thick winter clothes with having a lot of protection gear underneath.

In Switzerland I increased the testing up to free riding. For all of you who are doing skiing or snowboarding I don't need to tell how cool it is to walk up the hills, enjoying the beautiful view and creating your own track in the deep powder snow afterwards. For all those who never had this experience please get a guide and check it out. There is no better way to feel nature and pure freedom.

Going back to my test. As a snowboarder it is most likely that during a run you fall on your back. As a free-rider it is daily business. Sometimes you are simply trying to avoid damage due to an obstacle recognized too late or trying to do some cool jumps. Both very likely can go wrong. The only thing you then can do is tuck your arms as close as possible to your body. In the best case you simply fall into the snow causing a big cloud of snow. In the worst case it flips you around a few times. As you can imagine all of this happens several times.

Winter turned out to be a much harder testing environment than summer. Just as I suspected from the start, freezing temperatures and accidents on pure ice (or at least on very hard snow) are inevitable. Since I felt confident from the tests in summer no day passed without having my DSLR with me, safely carried in the Megalopolis. I had wonderful days in the snow. The whole season passed with luckily no damage and no serious injuries —and then came the last ride on April 9th.

We were in Stuben (Austria) for a gathering of snowboard legends from all over the world. The sun was already shining strong and there was no blowing snow. I decided to go boarding for only one reason. I wanted to go boarding in shorts and a shirt. It's a great experience and a lot of fun but it can lead to plenty of pain without your usual covering of protective clothing. Early in the morning I lost control on a spot which even in these warm conditions was still frozen. As mentioned before I quickly applied my closed tuck position, bringing my arms in tight to my chest to avoid injuries. In this case it was a mistake. I did not have any clothes on to protect me, so I picked up a nasty bruise.

I got a few nice pictures of my accident results and in those pictures you can see me smiling. Why? For starters, I survived. And (as a bonus) this particularly violent crash still had no damaging result on my camera gear!

I was able to capture awesome shots in areas where most likely only free riders have access, and when the occasional falls had me eating snow and ice while muttering a few chosen foul words as I dusted myself off I quickly learned there was no need to check inside the pack to see if I was now carrying a dead DSLR and shattered glass.

Pros and Cons.

The pros and cons segment of any review typically starts with the pros, but in this case, I have only one small con and here it is: I know that many DSLR shooters are accustomed to carrying heavily loaded bags full of cameras, lenses, filters and other equipment. This backpack is not big enough for all this. So, it definitely is not made for those who can't leave home without a lot of gear. Maximum is one camera with a lens mounted plus two additional lenses. Using the Lumbar cassette reduces this issue a little bit.



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That's all I have as cons.

Pros: if you are looking for an opportunity to take a DSLR with you while you are engaged in an action sport, this is the product you should consider. In terms of quality I strongly recommend this backpack. If you think back to all the impacts mentioned you won't believe that even after this year the complete backpack has no serious damage except for a few hundred scratches. But those scratches can simply be considered as a cool new design.

The pack is surprisingly comfortable for long periods of time under harsh (bumpy) conditions when you consider the fact that it is after all a hard shell carrying weight.

I know that this is not an average review for the normal needs of a photographer. But I hope that for all outdoor and extreme sport photographers this has been valuable.

See you in the European Alps!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
Ho! Ho! Ho!

I left a bunch of goodies for you at
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Markins Ball Heads
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MELVILLE, N.Y. (November 29, 2011) – Today, Nikon Inc. announced the addition of a new flagship speedlight, the powerful and capable SB-910 speedlight. Building on the versatility of Nikon's Creative Lighting System (CLS), the SB-910 incorporates an enhanced intuitive operating system and graphic user interface (GUI). The SB-910 speedlight comes equipped with a wide zoom range covering the most popular focal lengths as well as FX/DX-format identification that optimizes zoom settings based on the camera body. This new speedlight also provides more efficient battery usage as well as an enhanced Thermal Cut-Out function.

The SB-910 speedlight is designed to provide easy operation and menu navigation, with its enhanced operating system featuring illuminated function buttons, a dedicated Menu button with quick access to custom settings and an improved LCD screen graphic user interface. Whether the unit is used as an on-camera flash, wireless commander or remote, the SB-910 speedlight will provide dependable and consistent flash exposure. Engineered to address the creative lighting challenges faced by today's photographers, the SB-910 speedlight includes quick on-demand performance and the ability to adapt seamlessly to nearly any possible lighting scenario.



Additionally, the new SB-910 incorporates a new Thermal Cut-Out function, which offers protection against damage to the flash panel and body from overheating during continuous flash use. Now, the flash recycling time is automatically delayed if a significant rise in temperature is detected, rather than ceasing operation to protect the unit. For additional durability, heat-resistance and ease-of-use, the SB-910 uses new hard-type color compensation filters for fluorescent and incandescent color temperature balancing. When using these filters, the flash automatically recognizes which filter is being used and adjusts white balance accordingly on the connected Nikon D-SLR camera. Additionally, the AF-assist illuminator of the SB-910 is compatible with the complete line of AF systems used in Nikon D-SLR cameras.

The SB-910 speedlight features three illumination patterns (standard, center-weighted and even) which are designed to match almost any shooting situation when utilizing the speedlight. The "standard" pattern will cover all conventional, standard flash coverage. The "center-weighted" pattern provides larger guide numbers than other light distribution types at the same focal lengths. This illumination pattern is ideal for subjects such as portraits, in which the light falloff at the image edges can be disregarded.



New From Nikon



When "even" is selected, the light from the flash will cover a subject from the center to the edges without light falloff. This pattern is applicable for shooting group photographs indoors. For coverage with a variety of lenses, the SB-910 speedlight incorporates a multi-step power zoom range that covers a wide 17-200mm angle of view, and can automatically detect Nikon FX and Nikon DX formats to help select suitable light distribution.

The SB-910 speedlight includes support for Nikon's advanced wireless TTL operation and can function as a wireless commander with control over three separate groups of speedlights or as a remote speedlight triggered by other SB-910 speedlights, SB-700 speedlights, SU-800 Wireless Commander or the built-in speedlight set to Commander

Mode on compatible Nikon D-SLR cameras. The SB-910 incorporates a high-speed recycling time of approximately 2.3 seconds for full power with NiMH batteries, and approximately 4.0 seconds with AA Alkaline batteries.

Optional water guards will be available for select cameras to protect the connection between the flash and camera, allowing users to utilize the flash when weather conditions are less than ideal. The SJ-4 Color Filter set provides a Warming, Red, Yellow or Blue filter for adding color to the background, foreground or just to accent the scene. The SB-910 will come equipped with the AS-21 Speedlight Stand, SW-13H Diffusion Dome, SZ-2FL and SZ-2TN hard type Color Compensation Filters and SS-910 soft case.

Price and Availability

Nikon's new flagship speedlight, the SB-910, will be available in mid-December 2011 for a SRP* of \$549.95. For more information, please visit www.nikonusa.com.



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Calendar

Coming Soon from the Nikonians Academy Staff

Featured Workshops in the Master Your Vision Series

Michael Mariant will lead:

- Yosemite in Winter: A Season of Contrast from February 16 to the 19th, 2012
- Death Valley in the Spring from March 22nd to the 25th, 2012
- Big Sur: From the Coast to the Canyons from April 19 to the 22nd, 2012

Steve Simon will lead:

- The Passionate Photographer on January 27, 2012

Mike Hagen leads:

- Galapagos Photography Adventure - On September 14-23, 2012
- African Photo Safari, Tanzania - May 2-13, 2012 and November 4-15, 2012

Jim Stamates leads:

- Yellowstone Wildlife Adventure - Spring - On June 2-5, 2012
- Wildlife Adventure in Grand Teton NP - On June 6-9, 2012
- Alaska - Whales, Bears and Ice Fields Wildlife Photography Adventure - On July 22-28, 2012
- Yellowstone Wildlife Adventure - Fall - On October 3-6, 2012

Lester Picker leads:

- Acadia National Park Photography Adventure on October 18-21, 2012

Check the Nikonians Academy [home page](#) for details.

Coming next year from the Nikonians Academy Europe Staff

Our new and revised camera body workshop Master your D90, D7000, D300/D300S, D700, D3/D3S/D3X In Depth is scheduled on March 4, 2012 in London (Hammersmith).

John McDonald has also scheduled a rerun of the Master Nikon Capture NX2 workshop on March 24, 2012 in London (Hammersmith).

The popular Master the Nikon i-TTL Flash System workshop has been scheduled again on March 3, 2012 in London (Hammersmith).

Our successful Bird of Prey workshop in the Netherlands has been scheduled again on April 28, 2012.

The Essential Image Processing Techniques post processing workshop puts the focus on digital workflow, colour management, and post processing techniques essential to the photographer. It is suitable for people using either Nikon Capture NX2, Adobe Camera Raw/Lightroom and/or Adobe Photoshop and is planned to run again on March 18, 2012 in Utrecht.

Wanting to learn all about your advanced Nikon DSLR camera? The new Master your D90, D7000, D300/D300S, D700, D3/D3S/D3X In Depth camera workshop will be coming to Utrecht on March 17, 2012

To Learn all about the Nikon flash system, come join us on March 24, 2012 in Utrecht for a rerun of our Master the Nikon i-TTL Flash System workshop.

Check the Nikonians Academy Europe [home page](#) for details.





Our 11th Annual Nikonians Photo Adventure Trip members pose for the traditional farewell dinner group shot (taken by J. Ramón Palacios). The complete attendance roster is on page 15. For an interesting "behind the scenes" look at our Nikonians in action check out the [11th ANPAT Friends Gallery](#). You will find the traditional "line of tripods" shots and also some amusing images. One of our editing team favorites is called "[Face off on the yellow line](#)."