© Fog Quaker Oats Bridge, Bob Lancaster, *2nd Place March Contest*

The Focal Point

Official Newsletter of the
LINN AREA PHOTO CLUB

Moose Peterson Seminar

On Saturday, April 23rd, LAPC held our 8th Annual Photography Seminar featuring Nikon Ambassador Moose Peterson.

The surveys that were completed had an overwhelmingly positive tone concerning these aspects of the seminar: the speaker's charisma, the information Moose shared, the facility and the change from a box lunch to a hot catered meal.

Thus LAPC's philosophy of "Sharing our Passion for Photography!" via these annual seminars was a success.

I want to personally thank the 24+ LAPC volunteers who gave of their time on Friday night to setup, and on Saturday, both before and after the seminar, returning the facility to its original condition.

Another thanks to Dave Johnson from PhotoPro for providing the refreshments during our breaks.

And finally, a thanks to Cedar Valley Bible Church for allowing us to host the seminar in your facility. Thru your generosity, we collected $125 in free will offerings for CVBC.
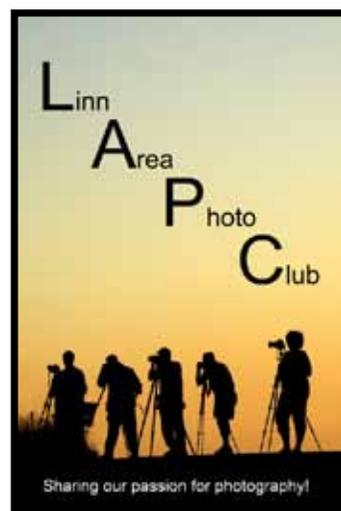
The question that has arisen is, do we seek out another Nikon Ambassador for 2017 or do we alternate with a Canon Explorer of Light. Please give me your thoughts.

Bob Lancaster

vice-president@linnareaphotoclub.org

In This Issue

Linn Area Photo Club

Sharing our passion for photography!

© Mike Stark

June LAPC group shoot

What: Remote Control Model Airplanes

Where: SkyHawks Field

When: Saturday June 4th, 1pm to 4pm

Address: 3125 C Ave Ext, Marion, Iowa 52302

GPS Coordinates: 42.089512, -91.644912

Get out your ear plugs and find out how fast you can pan with a fast moving subject. Join us in June on another LAPC group shoot as we track the model aircraft of the Cedar Rapids SkyHawks. Shoot the take-off, flying, and landing. Ear plugs recommended if you have sensitive hearing.

No RSVP needed. Come when you want, stay as long as you'd like. Its their annual SkyHawks Club Demo Day - (Demonstration of various types of aircraft, a chance for the big boys to show off their toys.) There will be more flyers there at the beginning rather than the end.

As with most of our club shoots, this shoot is free to attend for all current LAPC members.

Please consider donating 2 or 3 images back to the SkyHawks Model airplane club as a thank you for letting our group observe their Demo Day. Remember to include an 'Image Rights release' note in your email for your photo donation. Please forward images or links to images in dropbox/similar to activities@linnareaphotoclub.org.

For more information on the Cedar Rapids Skyhawks: http://crskyhawks.org/

Amy Mueggenberg

LAPC Activities Officer

© Mike Stark

A FEW PHOTOGRAPHY MYTHS

Digital Photography is Easier Than Film

You can ruin just as many pictures in digital cameras and digital post-production as were ruined in film. All photographers need basic photography education and experience regardless of digital or film. It costs less to make a mistake in digital than film, but both require a learning curve. Both require the knowledge of the camera, light, focusing, depth of field, composition, etc. Digital however gives you faster feedback on the images you have taken versus waiting for film to be processed.

Photography Is Easy

Photography is a lot of things, but it isn't easy. Sure. It's easy to take a picture – pick up the camera, and push a button. But mastering the art of creating compelling photographs that are aesthetically appealing to not only yourself – but others as well…. takes time, patience, and lots of practice.

Over time, it may become easier to remember rules and settings –but photography isn't something that most photographers would ever call "easy".

What You See is What You Get

Digital cameras are all about WYSIWYG, right? Everything looks sharp on that three-inch LCD monitor on the back of the camera. But even with histograms and zoom viewing enabled, you can never be sure until you get back to your computer, launch Photoshop and view the image at 100 percent. Then there may be issues like; white balance, sharpness, skin tones, etc.

Megapixels Rule

While it's generally true that the greater the megapixels, the better the camera, this doesn't necessarily translate into performance. Those extra megapixels can be overkill. For most digital camera users, the hard drive simply fills up faster with data that is never used. Most folks never bother to delete images that are out of focus, blurry or poorly exposed – which means a terabyte can fill up pretty quickly.

What is needed is bigger sensors. More megapixels crowded onto a small sensor equals more noise or less detail. Period. Fact. Not controvertible. Not debatable. You can't change physics. You can use digital back-end processing to cover this up so the result appears satisfactory, but you are making a compromise. Plain and simple. Depending on the sensor size, anything between 12 and 18 megapixels is more than enough.

Only Shoot Raw

RAW is not for everyone, and certainly not for every photo shoot. Some wedding photographers shoot RAW for everything, and it's unnecessary. Only the formal portraits, and perhaps images from the ceremony itself, require such huge file sizes.

The formal portraits tend to be the ones that wedding couples enlarge, so that makes sense. As for the ceremony, often the venue is poorly lit or flash is not allowed, which can make RAW a good choice. But images of the reception rarely get enlarged beyond a 5 x 7. Those should be JPEG.

Too many photographers use RAW as a crutch. Then when their computers slow down as their hard drives fill up, they mistakenly think it's their computer and not their workflow.

If you want larger "prints" (say… 11 x 14 or larger) or you want to/have to do a significant amount of editing to your image prior to printing, the more data you have to work with before you go to post production, the better. Shoot in those cases RAW.

Full Frame Is the Only Camera To Own

You do not need a full-frame sensor camera to get a great photo. Full-frame sensors became the holy grail mostly because for years we didn't have anything but crop sensor cameras. People want what they can't have so – hence the theme that only full-frame camera are worthy. Most of the images pro's sell are made on crop-sensor cameras. Full-frame helps the sensor size issue discussed above.

Only Low-Light Cameras/Lenses Are Worth Owning

They have a place like all equipment. A better investment is a tripod! If you are consistently shooting low light subjects that move (indoor sports, night concerts, etc.) then low light equipment is better. With higher ISO capability in many cameras today, that is becoming less of an issue.

Avoid Shooting in Bad Lighting

There's no such thing as bad lighting. As long as there is some source of light – you will always have the opportunity to take great photographs. Don't limit yourself to only shooting during specific lighting conditions.

Being able to make the most of the light at hand is an important skill for a photographer to have, and will enable you to capture photos in all different lighting conditions.

If you do anything to a photo in Photoshop it's no longer a photo.

If it started its life in a camera it's a photo. Ansel Adams never used Photoshop, but he manipulated the Hell out of his pictures. There is no reality in any photography. There never has been. It doesn't exist. Under this argument only a Pin Hole Camera image is a photo. All those dials and buttons on any camera are manipulating the image. Focus Ring, Aperture Priority, ISO Setting, Lenses, digital printing, … all manipulate the image.

Only Shoot in Full Manual Mode

Most professionals shoot in aperture priority mode or shutter priority mode 95% of the time. There are times where manual mode should be used, for example Panoramas. You should however shoot a lot of practice images in "Manual" so you learn more about light and camera settings.

Color Managed Work Flows/Tools Guarantee Perfect Color Images

Color managed work flows/tools guarantee CONSISTENT results between your monitor and your final print. Meaning, if you see a photo that's 10 points too blue on your monitor it will translate that way on your print. But in does not guarantee a perfectly color balanced print.

There are a lot of variables that impact a final print. Camera, monitor, print lab monitor, printer, software, etc.
There is a Perfect Exposure For Any Given Shot

As with all things in photography the answer should start with "It depends". There is never one single perfect exposure for any given scene. There are always compromises, trade-offs and taste involved. There IS only one correct exposure if you have a firm vision of what you want to accomplish before you press the shutter, and know which exposure will deliver that exact result. But that's between you and your camera. The rest of us don't need to know.

Always Use the Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds calls for the main focal points of an image to be placed on the thirds sections of an image. While a great rule of thumb – there are times when the image will call for something different, and don't hesitate to stray from this rule when it best serves the composition.

For example, subjects with symmetry often benefit by being placed in the center of an image, rather than to the side.

Good Photographers Never Use the On-Camera Flash

While it's true that the on-camera flash can produce some ghastly results, in some cases, the pop-up flash can be a lifesaver.

The secret is knowing when to use it, and how. Scenarios where the on-camera flash can come in handy include using it as a fill flash when shooting in bright sun. Oor diffusing or bouncing the flash to reduce/produce shadows.

Avoid Post Processing Your Images

This can go both ways. While some hold fast to their belief that post processing should be avoided at all costs, others go all out and post process every photo. The truth is that the best option lies somewhere in the middle. Post processing and editing images in Lightroom or Photoshop can enhance an image, but don't expect it to rescue a poorly composed photo.

However, many images require just a touch of processing to help bring out their fullest potential, and even professionals use post processing to help an image to look its best.

© Dave Maley

© Dave Maley

Connect with other members online!

Facebook: *https://www.facebook.com/LinnAreaPhotoClub/*

Flickr: *https://www.flickr.com/groups/1927028@N23/*

Google+: *https://plus.google.com/communities/100746748738516490166*

If there are other communities online, please send the address to *newsletter@linnareaphotoclub.org*

Mat Cutting 101

Tools

* Mat Board

* Mat Board Color Samples

* Mat Knife (not a utility knife) and Blades

* Logan Board Mounted Mat Cutter or Logan Adapt-A-Rule Cutting Guide & Wood Board

* Logan Bevel Mat Cutter (Pull Style)

* Clamps (if using a Logan Adapt-A-Rule Cutting Guide)

* Carpenters Square

* Pencil

* Ruler (metal)

* Note Paper

* Mat Saver File

© Dave Maley

Mat Board Materials

Mat boards are made of 100% cotton fibers and is called museum board. These mat boards are now made in many colors and are in use by most professional shops. These boards never turn color, the cut edges always stay pure white and never turn brown, nor do the boards leak acid into the art. These rag mats are 100% archival and should be used on any art that is worth anything to you. These mats are usually about double the price of regular cardboard mat boards and some are five times the price.

You can buy mat boards in some craft stores (Hobby Lobby, Michaels, etc.), or at a picture framing shop.

Understanding Measurements

Let's say you have an 8 x 10 picture you want to mat and frame. You want the mat to cover the edges of your picture. You cannot just cut an 8 x 10 hole in a mat board and expect that to work because the picture would fall through it. You should always have the picture covered all around the edges by ¼ inch of mat board. If we take the 8 x 10 picture and deduct ¼ inch all the way around, what you then need is a mat with a 7-½ by 9-½ inch hole cut in it. So in other words, no matter what

you are framing, you need to deduct ½ inch from the horizontal measurement and the vertical measurement to get the hole size required.

Once you know the size of the hole in the mat board you require you are pretty much all set. So if our 7 ½ x 9 ½ hole had 2 inches added all around it we find out that we need a piece of mat board with a total height and width of 11 ½ x 13 ½ inches. If 3 inches added all around it we find out that we need a piece of mat board with a total height and width of 13 ½ x 15 ½ inches.

Picture		Hole		1" Mat Border		2" Mat Border		3" Mat Border	
4	6	3.50	5.50	5.50	7.50	7.50	9.50	9.50	11.50
5	7	4.50	6.50	6.50	8.50	8.50	10.50	10.50	12.50
8	10	7.50	9.50	9.50	11.50	11.50	13.50	13.50	15.50
11	14	10.50	13.50	12.50	15.50	14.50	17.50	16.50	19.50
16	20	15.50	19.50	17.50	21.50	19.50	23.50	21.50	25.50

Let's study this just a bit more. Let's say you want that 8 x 10, or more exact the 7 ½ x 9 ½ picture to fit into an 11 x 14 frame you have kicking around the house. To do this would require the 11 x 14 mat to have 1-¾ inches of mat on the sides, and the top and bottom would have to be 2 ¼ inches. Do you notice that the sides and tops are not equal?

You can't do this with store brought picture frames, foam board and mats.

If you really want the professional look, you will want to add a nice even space all around the cut out hole, then order a picture frame "to fit". In the example above, for an even 3" border you would order a 13 ½ x 15-½ frame.

Measuring and Marking

Once you know the hole size, and have added the mat size all the way around, you now know the

total size mat you need. In the example above you need a mat 13 ½ by 15 ½ inches. Then you need to use a carpenter's square to mark this measurement out on a piece of mat board. Make sure the marks are true and square by measuring across all four corners, then cut this piece of mat board out using:

1) Straight edge and a Mat Knife

2) Rotary paper cutter

3) Guillotine paper cutter

4) Logan Board Mounted Mat Cutter

If using a Mat Knife, make sure your mat is lying on top of a piece of cardboard or old piece of mat board so as to protect the top of whatever table you are using.

Measure and mark your cuts. Always make your pencil marks on the backside of the mat board, never on the front side. Cut your mat.

Now that you have your 13 ½ x 15 ½ piece of mat board cut out, you need to lay it face down on a piece of cardboard. Using a straight edge and your rulers, mark out the 3 inch borders all the way around (or whatever size border you are using). You should end up with a mat board with a hole marked out on the back. Take your ruler and measure this cut out. It should measure exactly 7 ½ x 9 ½ inches for your 8 x 10 picture. Always measure the cut out before you actually cut the mat to be sure the hole will be the correct size when you are finished. Test your image to see if it fits!

Mat Cutting

Make sure your mat cutters have new blades in them. Some professionals use a new blade on every mat they cut! New blades make the cut edges of the mat crisp and clean. You will soon note the difference between a sharp clean cut with a new blade and the look of a cut done with a dull blade.

When cutting mats keep the cutting tool moving at a steady pace. When you come to a corner learn to not slow down, but to make your cuts smooth and steady and learn to "stop quickly at the corners." This process makes your corners look much nicer.

The best knifes to use is the Logan 500 Mat Knife and/or a Logan Bevel Cutting Head. These knifes work better than a utility knife because it use real mat cutting blades. These blades last longer and make nicer cuts. These knives are also inexpensive to buy.

Logan Board Mounted Mat Cutter

1. Set the Mat Guide to the desired border width. For example, for a 3" border, align the back of the Mat Guide at the 3" mark and tighten the Black Knobs

2. Place the mat color side down under the Guide Rail and up against the squaring bar and mat guide.

3. Using a pencil, draw a line down the full length of the back of the matboard. Turn the mat after each marking and repeat this for the remaining three sides. (if all sides are to be the same)

4. Attach the Bevel Cutter to the Guide Rail by fitting the black nylon guides over the raised edge

of the channel.

5. Position the cutter so the middle start & stop line lines up with the marked line closest to the top of the machine.

6. Use your thumb to firmly depress the blade holder all the way down to insert the blade.

7. With your left hand putting pressure down on the guide rail, slide the bevel cutter until the Start and Stop indicator lines up with the bottom pencil line.

a. DO NOT GO PAST THE LINE!

b. It is essential to keep even downward pressure on the Blade Holder as you cut.

8. Use your thumb to pop the blade holder back out of the mat board, lift the guide rail slightly to turn the mat a 1/4 turn and continue cutting the remaining three sides.

Logan Hand Held Mat Cutter

1. Place the mat color side down.

2. Place the Logan Adapt-A-Rule Cutting Guide on one of your lines and clamp firmly

3. Attach the Bevel Cutter to the Guide Rail by fitting the black nylon guides over the raised edge of the channel.

4. Position the cutter so the middle start & stop line lines up with the marked line closest to the top.

5. Use your thumb to firmly depress the blade holder all the way down to insert the blade.

6. With your left hand putting pressure down on the guide rail, slide the bevel cutter until the Start and Stop indicator lines up with the bottom pencil line.

a. DO NOT GO PAST THE LINE!

b. It is essential to keep even downward pressure on the Blade Holder as you cut.

7. Use your thumb to pop the blade holder back out of the mat board, unclamp lift the guide rail slightly to turn the mat a 1/4 turn and continue cutting the remaining three sides.

After cutting all four of your cuts on the backside of the mat board, gently pick up your mat board and turn it over. I will assume that you will find your corners to not be cut all the way off cleanly, because you didn't want to over cut your corners.

So be gentle when picking up and turning over your mat board. If the corners of the cut edges are still holding,

you do not want the cut center piece to just go dropping out by it's weight and causing the corners to be torn loose.

(If the paragraph above is unclear - just go ahead and cut a mat board. When you turn it over, the paragraph above will be instantly made clear)

A corner-cutting hint. Try to cut your corners cleanly and all the way off the first time. If your corners are still holding turn the mat face up and using a mat cutting blade or your utility knife, just gently insert the blade in the cut and clip the corners loose. Usually all you have to do is make that one little cut to finish the job. You will want to do this finishing job from the front side of the mat most of the time.

Mat Saver File When you have your mat window all cut out, check the edges of your cut mat for any defects you have done. Don't expect perfection at first! You will notice that dull blades leave a ragged cut along the edges of the cut edges, and maybe your corners need a little touching up. Don't use a knife or mat cutting blade to do this. You will invariably make it worse. Instead use a mat saver file to file off the raggies and fix small errors as shown in the photo.

These files work great, but I will state right here, that if you can get to the point where you don't need to use them, or barely use them, your mats will be so much better. Mat saver files have a purpose. Trying to save a real poorly cut mat is not one of them.

So your first mat came out poorly. Anyway, don't throw your bad mats away. Number one is that you can cover them with all kinds of beautiful cloth. Just wrap it around and glue it on the mat. Do you know how expensive cloth covered mats are in a frame shop? You can paint them, cover them with glued on fine sand, air brush them. I have even made some wonderful looking mats by burnishing them with a blow torch. The ideas are unlimited! Or save them and cut a bigger opening for a bigger print in the future. Credit goes to www.GrignonsArt.com for this article.

© Dave Maley, *An early spring walk, Shot on Fuji slide film with 50mm f1.4 manual lens*

The F⊙cal Point

PHOTO CONTEST AWARD WINNERS MARCH

© Pam Olson, *3rd Place Open Category*

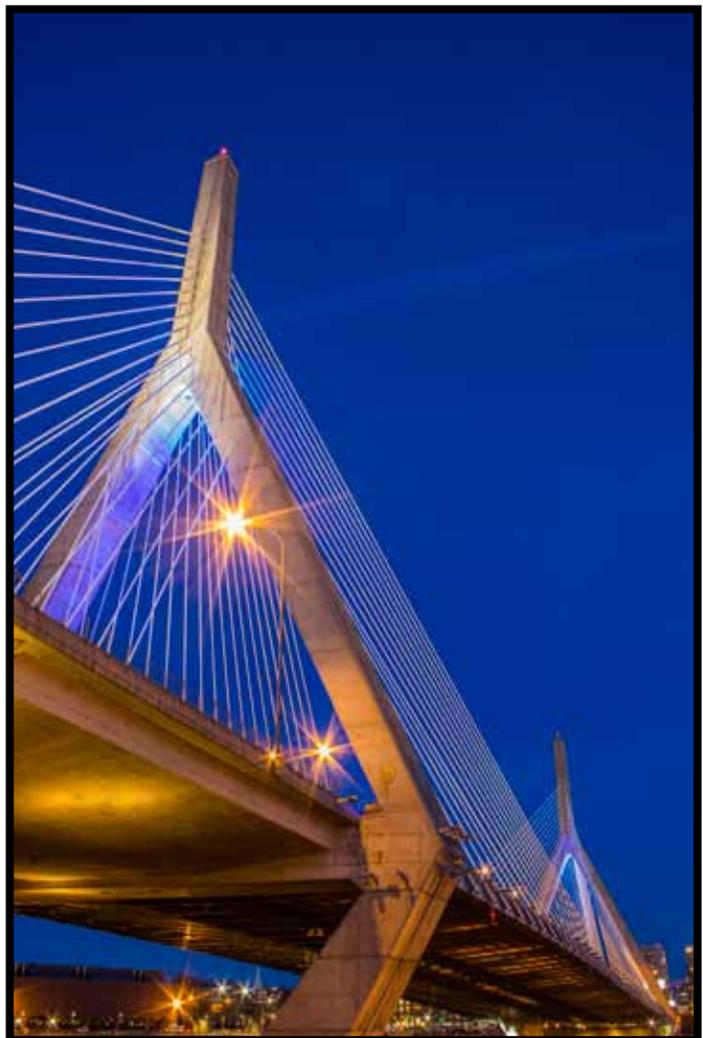© *Morning Fog Squaw Creek*, Bob Lancaster, *1st Place*

© Pam Olson, *1st Place*

PHOTO CONTEST AWARD WINNERS APRIL

© Pam Olson, *2nd Place*

Annual Contest Categories

1. People and Portraits
- Defined as individuals or groups of people as the primary focus of the photo.

2. Black and White
(no color or selected color photos are allowed)
- Any permissible subject is allowed.
- No color photos allowed.

3. Animals
- Domestic, captive, or wild.
- Includes mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, etc.
- Does not include insects (see Macro/Close-Up category).

4. Landscape / Scenery
- Photos that focus on natural settings.

5. Macro / Close-Up
- Macro/Close-up of any permissible subject.
- Includes insects.

6. Architecture
- Photos where man-made permanent structures are the theme (i.e.; buildings, bridges, dams, architectural elements, etc.).

7. Panoramic
- Defined as "capture of images with elongated fields of view".
- Any permissible subject is allowed.
- Minimum size: 6" on the shorter measurement
- Minimum aspect ratio: 2:1
- May be either cropped from a single image or multiple images stitched together.
- All mounting, framing, etc., requirements and/or restrictions apply unless specifically noted otherwise here.

8. Computer Enhanced / Manipulated
- Anything obviously and overtly unnatural and manipulated in the computer and/or darkroom (i.e.: selective coloring, unnatural-looking HDR, etc.).
- Any permissible subject is allowed.

9. Anything Goes
- Images that do not fit any of the above categories, but are otherwise not restricted (i.e.: collages, nude, etc.).
- Does not include computer enhanced or panoramas.

10. Annual Club-Selected Theme
- Theme to be decided by LAPC members each year. (2015 Theme: "Fall")
- One (1) entry per person.
- To be judged as a "Member's Choice".
- One (1) vote per member (one chip).
- 1st Place only shall be awarded.
- Not eligible for "Best of Show" Award.
- Winner will receive one (1) year's paid membership to LAPC for the next year.

Annual Contest Rules

Eligibility:

a) Competitors must be members in good standing of Linn Area Photo Club (LAPC), and have paid their dues (at time of judging).

b) Must be present during contest to participate.

c) Photos must be submitted to the entry table by 1:30 (Not just in the building).
LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!!!

Entry format:

a) Entries must be in print form only.

b) No restriction regarding print paper. Glossy, matte, metallic, canvas, etc., are all acceptable.

c) Entries may be either color or black & white in any category, unless specifically restricted.

d) Entries must be the original work of the competitor, and must have been taken within five (5) years .

e) Entries cannot have been a previous LAPC Annual Contest winner (1st, 2nd, or 3rd Place). Entries may have been a previous LAPC Monthly Contest winner.

f) Photos may be any size up to, and including, 11"x14" (including matting, if applicable)*.

g) All photos must be mounted on 11"x14"* foam core that is at least 1/8" thick.

h) Matting is optional.

i) Entries can NOT be framed or include any type of covering.

j) All entries must have the competitor's name, image title, category, and an arrow indicating the "up" orientation on the back in the lower right-hand corner. Information must be legible.

k) Entrant's name, photo title, date, and any other text cannot appear on the front of the photo.

l) No collages.

m) Any photo may be disqualified by the Contest Rules Committee if deemed inappropriate and/or not meeting any rule or requirement.

n) Nude photos are not eligible.

*See Panorama Category for panorama size criteria.

Entries, Prizes, & Judging:

a) Each competitor may submit up to two (2) photos in each category, with an overall total of eight (8) maximum submissions for the entire contest. Does not include club-selected theme category.

b) Three (3) winning entries (1st, 2nd & 3rd Place), along with up to three (3) "Honorable Mention" entries, will be selected, per category.

c) Only the three winning entries (1st, 2nd, & 3rd Place) in each category, as well as "Best of Show", will receive a prize. Competitors may win up to two (2) awards/prizes in each category.

d) The same photo may not be entered into more than one (1) category.

e) "Best of Show" Award will be selected from amongst the 1st Place winners in all categories (except Annual Club-Selected Theme category), and be awarded in addition to the 1st Place Award for that category.

f) The Annual Contest will be judged by a pre-selected judge or judges.

g) Judge(s) and/or Contest Rules Committee members reserve the right to move photos to other categories if category choice is deemed inappropriate. Photo will be disqualified if appropriate category already has maximum number of competitor entries.

Monthly Contest Rules

Eligibility:a) Competitors must be members in good standing
   of Linn Area Photo Club (LAPC), and have paid their dues (at time of judging).

b) Must be present during contest to participate

Entry format:

a) Entries must be in print form only.

b) No restriction regarding print paper. Glossy, matte, metallic, canvas, etc., are all acceptable.

c) Entries may be either color or black & white.

d) Entries must be the original work of the competitor, and must have been taken within two (2) years .

e) Entries cannot have been a previous LAPC Monthly or Annual Contest winner.

f) Minimum size: 8"x10". Maximum size" 11"x14" (including matting, if applicable)

g) Entries may be mounted, but it is not a requirement.

h) Matting is optional.

i) Entries can NOT be framed or include any type of covering.

j) All entries must have the competitor's name, image title, and an arrow indicating the "up" orientation on the back in the lower right-hand corner. Information must be legible.

k) Entrant's name, photo title, date, and any other text cannot appear on the front of the photo.

l) No collages.

m) Any photo may be disqualified by the Contest Rules Committee if deemed inappropriate and/ or not meeting any rule or requirement

n) Nude photos are not eligible.

Entries, Prizes, & Judging:

a) Each competitor may submit up to two (2) photos in each monthly contest.

b) Three (3) winning entries (1st, 2nd, & 3rd Place) will be selected.

c) Only the First Place winner will receive a prize.

d) Contest will be judged by a vote of LAPC members.

ABOUT THE LINN AREA PHOTO CLUB

The Linn Area Photo Club (LAPC) was established in November 2003 in order to bring together individuals in the greater Linn County, Iowa, area who are interested in acquiring and developing an appreciation of the art and techniques of photography.

Monthly meetings are normally held at 1:30pm the second Sunday of the month at Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center in Toddville.
(See Calendar of Events for details)

Club Membership is open to photographers of all skill levels and photographic interests. Club Membership dues are $25 annually and includes a variety of educational programs, seminars and photo shoots.

There is an informal monthly theme contest and an annual club contest that drew over 90 entries in its first year.

Members range from beginners to professionals and use both digital and traditional photographic technology. LAPC is a great place to meet and learn from other photo enthusiasts.

The F⊙cal Point

2015 LAPC Elected Officers

President: Rick Young
(319) 360-0060
president@linnareaphotoclub.org

Vice-President: Bob Lancaster
(319) 297-7052
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Secretary: Justin Tedford
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secretary@linnareaphotoclub.org

Treasurer: David Byrnes
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2015 LAPC Appointed Officers & Committees

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LAPC Contests & Contest Rules:
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contests@linnareaphotoclub.org

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