Crystal Lake Camera Club Newsletter

Serving Crystal Lake and surrounding communities since 1980

February, 2014	Year 2013-2014, Issue 6

CLCC Officers

(September 2013 - August, 2014)

- **Co-Presidents:**
  Al Popp
  Chuck Rasmussen
- **Vice President:**
  David Jilek
- **Treasurer:**
  Larry Swanson

CLCC Support Staff

- **Webmaster:**
  Sandy Wittman
- **Newsletter Editor:**
  Rich Bickham

Presidents' Column

Standing at the front picture window looking at the snow and cloudy skies, and with the temperature below zero and the wind chill around -45°, we can feel the bitter cold through the clear glass. It's cold out there! We think about what we might be taking pictures of if it were not so cold, but we're not going out in this stuff. What can we shoot and have fun with inside the house where it is warm and photographer friendly, and the hot chocolate is close by?

Have you ever thought about what is in your house that may be fun to shoot? *Window light* is beautiful - and adding a fill reflector or fill light can create some incredible images. Think about the possibilities - shallow depth of field, beautiful bokeh, the ideas are endless. Set up a small table and shoot using some backdrops or colored fabric.

Crystal Lake, IL - January, 2014   *Diane Mahachek*

A photographer friend of ours bought his wife some flowers a while ago and kept the red lace wrapping. It made a beautiful out-of-focus back ground for a small statue he photographed using the techniques mentioned above. Look at the grain in your hardwood floors - catch the right angle of bright, beaming light and you can create spectacular fine art photographs. Shooting like this could re-introduce you to your tripod, which may have fallen into disuse and might be collecting dust in an out-of-the-way storage space. It's a great tool that makes you think and plan before you shoot. The process creates those tack sharp images only the pros seem to get. Get back in tripod mode, and take it with you when you go shooting outside the house.

Nasty weather shouldn't tie you down or prevent you from being creative. Look around, play with different lenses, change f/stops and backgrounds. Get familiar with your camera and tripod again, and above all, have fun!

Chuck & Al

Have a Question? - Ask an Expert

The Crystal Lake Camera Club has been offering a "Drop in Early" mentoring session prior to its monthly meetings, making available an experienced photographer to answer photography questions or address photography problems that members may have. This has met with limited success.

We are expanding this concept to accommodate those members who may not be able to attend our monthly meetings on a regular basis. Effective with the March, 2014 newsletter we will provide answers to questions or solutions to problems submitted to the newsletter editor (richbickham@comcast.net) with the subject line "CLCC PHOTO QUESTION" prior to the newsletter input deadline which is two weeks prior to each monthly meeting. The club will contact an experienced member capable of answering the question or addressing the problem and have him/her personally respond to the submitting member. Both question or problem, and answer will also be printed in the newsletter as space permits.

We hope members will take advantage of this additional opportunity to tap into the vast knowledge base distributed across our club's membership.

MEMBER FOCUS

CACCA Winners

*W*inning photographs from the December CLCC meeting competition, along with any entries that received a score of 22 or higher were entered into the January CACCA competition. Congratulations to the following CACCA winners:

Tom Hughes :

"Real Bikers" - Large Color - CACCA Honorable Mention

Norm Kopp :

"Country Church 1" - Small Monochrome - CACCA Honorable Mention

*M*ariela Ryan's large color print "City of Science", which won Honorable Mention at the December CLCC competition but which was unavailable for printing in the January newsletter, is shown below.

MCC EXHIBITION AT LARK CREATIVE STUDIOS

*T*here is still time to visit CLCC member *Laura Kohlbrand's* Lark Creative Studios to see the exhibition of three students of Andrew Doak's Digital Photography 3 class at McHenry County College. The exhibition is open from noon until 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday (Monday by appointment only) and runs through January 31. The studio is located at 835 S. Virginia Rd., Unit A in Crystal Lake.


*C*lub member *Mariela Ryan's* work (left) is comprised of large color portraits of her adolescent daughter and her daughter's friends under conditions of consistent focal distance, backdrop and lighting. All subjects were photographed while looking directly at the camera providing the viewer an emotional connection.

*D*allas Etzel's work (right) studies young adults of post-high school age enjoying life while visiting locales in California,

Utah, Arizona, Idaho, Virginia, Spain and Germany. Dallas shoots with a variety of equipment types from toy film cameras to DSLRs.
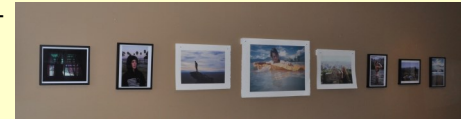
*B*randon Marks' work (left) is comprised of monochrome studies, mostly of people whose faces are intentionally obstructed in the photograph, a contradiction in portrait photography. Brandon shot some of his photographs with a pinhole camera made from a paint can. ◊

THE " FOUR P's "

Roger O. Willingham

- **P**HOTOGRAPHING - Combining the basic rules of photography with the technical capabilities of your camera to obtain a desired image.
- **P**ROCESSING - Using your photo editing software to improve and enhance your image.
- **P**RESENTING - Deciding how you want to display your image - large or small, color or monotone, print or DPI.
- **P**ARTICIPATING - Enjoying the benefits of the club by entering your image in competition and becoming involved in other club activities.

HOW TO SUBMIT PHOTOS TO THE CLCC WEBSITE

*I*n order to simplify the process and minimize the amount of work required by the club Webmaster, please use the following procedure to have your winning photographs from CLCC or CACCA competitions uploaded to the club website.

1) **I**f required, resize each photograph to a maximum of 1024 pixels wide (horizontal) by a maximum of 768 pixels high (vertical).
2) **E**mail a jpg file for each photograph to richbickham@comcast.net no later than one week after the competition.
3) **R**ich will then send all of the jpg files (in one, single batch) to our webmaster *Sandy Wittman*, who will upload them to the website in her monthly update.

*F*ailure to comply with the above procedure may result in your photographs not appearing in the newsletter or on the website in a timely manner, and we really want to showcase your pictures. ◊

TIP OF THE MONTH

Submitted by *Peter J. Pelke II*

Black & White Conversion in Photoshop Elements

There are four methods that can be used to convert a photo to black & white in Photoshop Elements (11). These are *Convert to Black and White*, *Hue/Saturation*, *Gradient Map*, and *Luminosity Methods*. I will discuss each in turn and show the step by step process for each.

Elements comes with a built-in converter called *Convert to Black and White* which can be found by going to the menu bar and selecting *Enhance > Convert to Black and White*. Once the dialog box opens you will see your image in color on the left and an initial black and white rendering on the right. You can make changes to this rendering through selections in the window. There are *Style Choices: Infrared Effect*, *Newspaper*, Portraits, *Scenic Landscape*, *Urban Snapshots*, and *Vivid Landscapes*. Another option is *Adjust Intensity*: *Red*, *Green*, *Blue*, and *Contrast*. When you click on the *Style Choices* the black and white rendering will change and you can choose which one of these you like best. If none of those works, you can create a custom look by changing the sliders in the *Adjust Intensity* portion. This simulates using a colored filter and sometimes works better for a custom look.

Hue/Saturation can also be used as a black and white conversion method. Open your image create a new *Adjustment Layer* by clicking on the 1/2 circle above the layers palette and in the drop down menu select *Hue/Saturation*. When this box opens change the blend mode to *Color* and click OK or close the box. Create another *Hue/Saturation* layer and move the *Saturation slider* to -100 and click OK or close the box. Now only select the first *Color Hue/Saturation* layer by clicking on that layer. Next click on the *sliders* icon in the highlighted layer and the *Hue/Saturation* box will open. You are now ready to make some interesting adjustments. The first adjustments to try are in each of the different color channels. Click on the down arrow in the *Channels* box and adjust each individual color until you get the desired result. This is all about preference so slide away to your heart's content to create your best image. You can also use *levels* and curves to change the image even more at this point. Sometimes higher contrast to start with on the original color image can help during this stage as well.

The *Gradient Map* is another method to change your image to black and white. Start by pressing "D" to ensure default colors; foreground is white and background is black. Now go to the menu bar and select *Layer > New Fill Layer > Gradient* then click OK. The *New Layer* box will appear and the name of your new layer will be "Gradient Fill 1", or whatever you want to call it - click OK. The *Gradient Fill* box will now open and in the *Gradient* selection click the down arrow and select *Foreground to Background* and click OK. Your image will disappear at this point and show a gray gradient but don't worry. Change the *Blending Mode* to color for the gradient level and your image is magically transformed to black and white. There is no adjustment at this point so what you see is what you get.

Luminosity Blend Mode can be used for black & white and color tinting as well. You will need to add a white color fill layer below the background layer and convert the *Blend Mode* to *Luminosity* on the original background layer.

Double click on the background layer to make it layer 0. Next make sure white is the foreground color and then click on the 1/2 circle in the *Layers* palette to create a , layer. Click and drag this layer below the original image layer, Layer 0. Make sure Layer 0 is highlighted and change the *Blend Mode* to *Luminosity* and again we have a black and white image. Try other *Blend Modes* for different effects and try different colors for different looks. To change colors double click in the *Color* box in the layer (for sepia R: 133 G: 75 B: 6 or so.....). This one has no adjustment other than the different color tints that can be applied.

These are the four ways to change a photo from color to black & white in Photoshop Elements. I hope you learned something and if you have any questions please call me at 847.346.9957 or 847.658.4939. You can also email me at *railroader9999@sbcglobal.net* - my website is www.isephoto.fototime.com . ◊

Chuck Rasmussen

COMPETITION

Ever ask yourself, "Why did I join the club in the first place?" You probably answered by saying to become a better photographer, or to learn more about a certain area of photography. If these answers apply, how will you know when you are getting better? What standards will you use to evaluate yourself?

Over the years, many folks have attended a competition evening. Some, perhaps intimidated by the outstanding quality of the pictures displayed, thought there was no way they could compete with those photographers. Well guess what? Folks who once believed the same thing took those outstanding images. They too, may have felt overwhelmed at first. But they watched – and they internalized – and they kept shooting – and finally it all came together for them. They realized they finally got it; whatever "got it" meant. They learned by entering their work. They didn't take judges' scores personally, they used the scores as tools to develop better ways to take, and to make, an improved photograph.

Competition isn't there to create *stress.* Competition is there to provide the single most effective process available for members to educate themselves on becoming better photographers. The beauty of the system is - it's all so individual. You may see a picture that takes your breath away. Then someone else wonders why anyone would take it in the first place. If you don't believe that, watch the judges' scores.

Remember, it's not personal. It's educational, and above all else it's "FUN". Never has a member who submitted a picture to a competition left feeling bruised and bleeding. But many have left with a solid understanding of how to do better the next time.

Growth through experience. What a concept! Now go have "FUN" and enter something this month. ◊

TRUE CONFESSIONS

Chuck Rasmussen

I had brain locked myself into thinking every photograph I took was going to go into competition. Yea, it happens, and it just sort of sneaks up on you. Before you know it, you stop taking pictures because nothing you shoot is good enough for competition. You get transformed into this "way to serious" mode and you stop having fun. You forget why you shoot pictures in the first place and you become engrossed in getting a "27" from the judges. Thank goodness I have a loving wife who snapped me out of my mental dilemma. She casually mentioned that she really liked a picture I had taken and wondered why I hadn't hung a print of it on one of our walls. I told her it wasn't good enough for competition and she said, "So what, I like it. Let's put it on the mantle." The truth is I really liked that shot too, but hesitated because of the "not good enough" mindset I had regarding what is and isn't quality. I realized I had stopped having fun talking pictures. I was extremely frustrated and didn't know why. I still took pictures, but the fun was gone. I had gotten much too serious and stuck in a rut.

I am sharing this story, because it is very important to remember that having fun is more important than winning any competition, and if you like a particular photo you took and no one else does, so what? The bottom line is "Are you enjoying yourself?" Like me, you may find that the winning photograph is the one you didn't know you took until you looked at your monitor and were pleasantly surprised - now that's really FUN. ◊
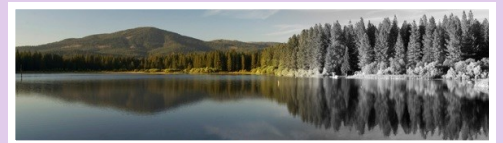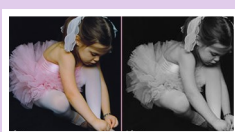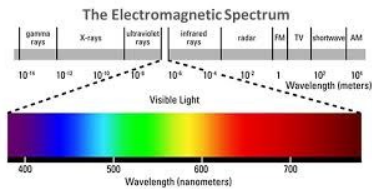
THE FRINGE OF STILL PHOTOGRAPHY *

One of The Most Expensive Cameras You 'Own' † - Part 1

Rich Bickham

The overwhelming majority of still photographs taken today use either film or electronic sensors that are sensitive only to radiation in the visible portion of the

electromagnetic spectrum (that tiny sliver of the spectrum to which our eyes are sensitive, and what we commonly refer to as "light" - see figure at left). Film cameras can use a color-tinted lens filter to enhance or restrict the amount of a given color of light reaching the film, while digital cameras can accomplish the same electronically. Photo editing software offers the user a range of tools to do the same on digital images. However, these tools (hardware or software) are generally used to create an image that is more pleasing or interesting to the viewer's 'eye' through various means including minor adjustment or outright changes to the color and character of the captured subject.

Multi-spectral imaging uses an array of separate cameras, each sensitive to only a fraction of the visible portion of the spectrum, and also infrared and ultraviolet bands on either side. This technology has been in use since 1972 on a series of US satellites beginning with the ERTS (Earth Resource Technology Satellite) and continuing with the later Landsat series (right) in near polar orbits around the earth. From a nominal altitude of approximately 438 or 572 miles, each satellite continuously photographs (during its lifetime) sections of the earth's surface in all its camera bands simultaneously.

The ERTS and Landsat satellites utilize up to eleven camera bands ranging from ultraviolet, through the visible to several infrared bands. The output of these various bands can be combined and filtered in different ways to bring out features of interest. If only the three visible bands (Red, Green & Blue) are simply 'added' a commonly recognizable **true-color** image results. Examples of detailed true-color photographs of two of earth's surface features are shown below.
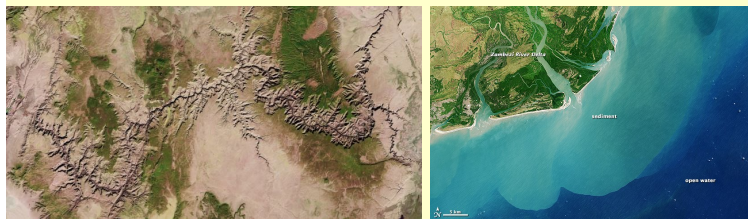
Grand Canyon   *USGS*   *Zambezi River Delta (Africa)*   *NASA*

Of greater interest (in keeping with the theme of this column) are **false-color** images, combining both visible and non-visible bands mapped into the visible spectrum using complex mathematical algorithms to bring out unseen details and extracting a wealth of information including environmental, natural resource identification and land use applications (among others) of great importance to earth's population and future. This will be the subject of part two in the March issue.

† *If you pay federal income tax, consider yourself a co-owner. The cost of the latest satellite in the series launched in 2013 (Landsat 8) was $855 million (satellite & launch costs). ◊*

* *This column (the third in a series) deals with areas that are peripherally related to still photography. - Ed*

THE LAST ASSIGNMENT

Rich Bickham

In early April of 1980, *Reid Blackburn (1952 -1980)*, a photographer working for the Vancouver, Washington *Columbian* newspaper photographed a smoldering Mount Saint Helens (Washington state) belching smoke and ash from a helicopter. Using several cameras, he captured many photographs, some of which were published in the *Columbian*. Five weeks later on May 18, 1980 Reid was on the volcano taking more photographs when the entire side of the mountain blew out in what has become recognized as a historic event in recent North American geologic history.
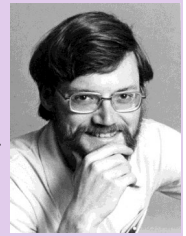
Reid Blackburn

Reid's body was found in his ash-filled car near Coldwater Creek four days after the blast during a search of the devastation. One of his cameras (left) was found about a week later buried in the surrounding debris. Unfortunately the film in the camera from that day was too damaged to be processed. Although his *Columbian* assignment at that location ended on May 17, he chose to stay a while longer.

A third of a century later, in December of 2013 an undeveloped roll of black & white film was discovered in a storage box in the *Columbian* archives – it was from his April helicopter shoot. No one knows why he did not have the film processed along with his other rolls from that flight. Recent processing of the film has yielded never-before-seen images of the active volcano a month before the cataclysmic event of May 18 (example above right).

Mount Saint Helens - April, 1980

Reid was not initially assigned to cover the 'local' eruptions, and felt left out of the action. An assistant editor of the *Columbian* said "He did express his frustration. He was on a night rotation. … While other staffers were booking flights to photograph Mount Saint Helens, he was shooting high school sports". When his shift rotated around to daylight hours Reid's wife Fay said "He was excited to get into the air".

He must also have been excited to get back onto the ground, closer to the action. *Reid Blackburn* died doing what he loved. One can only imagine what his final images would have shown. ◊

WORTH THE RISK?

Sandy Wittman

Sometimes when we find ourselves at a wonderful place to photograph, or a situation that is just too good not to photograph, we get so excited that we momentarily let go of our common sense. I am sure this has happened to all of us at one time or another.

I find that as I get older and less physically able than I was at 29, I have to be more careful about the environment around me when I am photographing. However you don't have to be my age to need to be aware and careful. Recently in Chicago, two young people died trying to retrieve a dropped cell phone, and in San Diego another young woman died when she fell off a cliff while someone was taking her photo. Both of their deaths involved photography.

FROM THE EDITOR

Chuck Rasmussen has written two articles for this month's newsletter which appear on page 3. Both are related to photographic competition. The first ("Competition") is aimed at those members who may hesitate to enter club competitions because they feel intimidated by the quality of the prints they have seen entered by other members of our club. The second ("True Confessions") is aimed at experienced members who may be too focused on getting the perfect shot at the expense of enjoying the hobby. Either way they are worth the time to read whether one applies to you directly, or applies to someone you know and could use some friendly "advice".
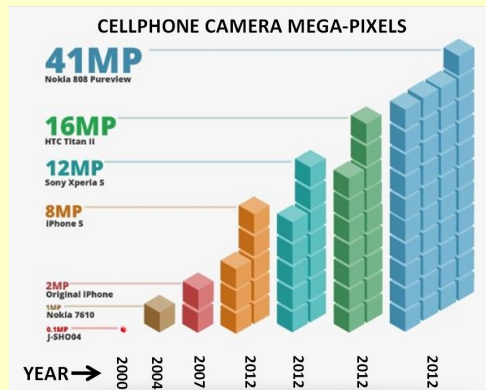
Rich Bickham

"GETTING CRAZY WITH IMAGES"

The above *Jim Pierce* program has been rescheduled for the club's March meeting since the *Artic Polar Vortex* forced us to cancel the January meeting.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Several members have indicated that they are not receiving the club newsletter. The newsletter is distributed by email using the member email addresses listed in the club directory. All members are encouraged to verify that their information in the directory is correct, and that their listed email address is an account that they check frequently. It is also suggested that members having problems also check their spam folder on a regular basis. If you don't have a copy of the latest directory, one should be available for inspection at all club meetings. ◊

CHARTS & STATISTICS

CELLPHONE CAMERA MEGA-PIXELS

41MP Nokia 808 Pureview
16MP HTC Titan II
12MP Sony Xperia S
8MP iPhone 5
2MP Original iPhone
1MP Nokia 7610
0.1MP J-SHO04

YEAR ➔ 2000 2004 2007 2012 2012 2012 2012

Sources: http://www.istockphoto.com/article_view.php?ID=1501 , *Wikipedia*

READER FEEDBACK

January Newsletter

Thanks for the new changes to the club. I am very excited about the newsletter, the tips, the website, and the "fun" added to everything. I feel like a real novice photographer, but hope to keep learning. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the club. I see that my address was not included in the directory which then means my town was not listed on the chart of communities in the newsletter.

Jackie Crosby - Harvard, IL

Some club database information is incomplete - corrections will be made as updated information becomes available. Corrections should be sent to Al Popp. Upon reissue of the member list ,the demographic chart and map will be updated. - Ed

Good job on the newsletter!

Michele Phillips - Crystal Lake, IL

Risk, from Page 4

Chicago Tribune newspaper columnist *Mary Schmich* wrote in her January 15th column "How many of us have stepped to the edge of a river or a rooftop, to the brink of disaster, in search of a slightly better photo to text or tweet or post on Instagram?... Millions of us have stood on top of the rock, under the waterfall, next to the giant wave: Hey, look, everybody. Here I am, little me next to the mystery and the majesty."
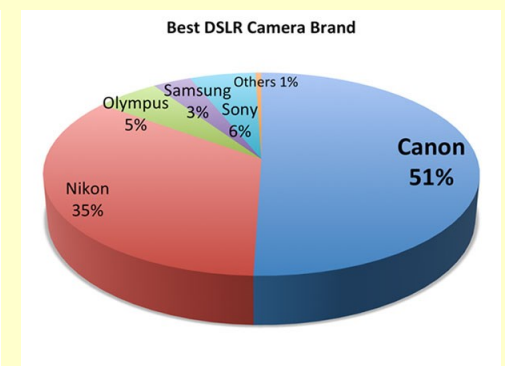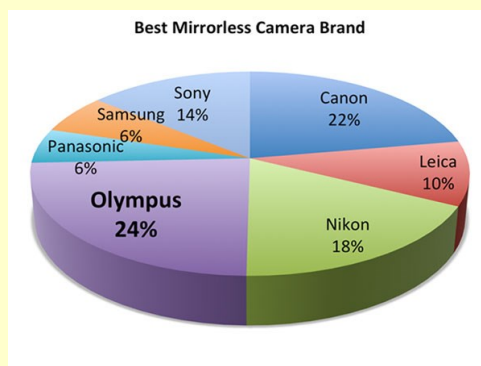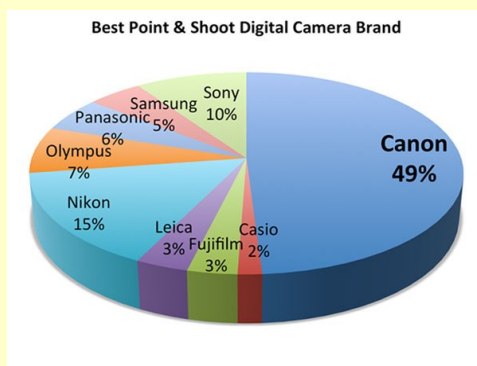
In many of these dangerous places, warning signs are posted. In San Diego a police office said "There's a lot of signage but people still want to get that photo."

Schmich noted that "You may tell yourself that you wouldn't be so rash, but to many people the cellphone feels as vital as an appendage. The instinct to protect and rescue it seems exactly that - an instinct more than a decision. That misplaced instinct sends people onto train tracks to grab a fallen phone. It tempts people to fight the phone thief. The person who hasn't made some rash, dangerous move involving a cellphone is the person who doesn't own one. Accidents are always easier to understand in hindsight…"

I sent Mary Schmich's article to a friend in Texas with whom I often travel to photograph. She replied that she had gone on a photo workshop to Arkansas several years ago. She said "We were at the rim before sunrise to shoot the mist in the canyon. There is a huge rock ledge and several of us were out on it getting set up. I was so excited as I set up INCHES from the edge (a 100 foot drop) when the wife of one of the guides casually said, "You know if you fall over the edge there won't be anything we can do for you." I stopped and took stock of the situation and was shocked. I backed up about 10 feet and finally moved my equipment. Several people have died from falling into that canyon."

As Mary Schmich says in her article, "Even in the civilized city, cliffs and rivers are dangerous. No photo is worth great risk. And you can always get another phone." ◊

CAMERA BRAND PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Best Point & Shoot Digital Camera Brand

Canon 49%
Nikon 15%
Olympus 7%
Panasonic 6%
Samsung 5%
Sony 10%
Leica 3%
Fujifilm 3%
Casio 2%

Best Mirrorless Camera Brand

Canon 22%
Leica 10%
Nikon 18%
Olympus 24%
Panasonic 6%
Samsung 6%
Sony 14%

Best DSLR Camera Brand

Canon 51%
Nikon 35%
Olympus 5%
Samsung 3%
Sony 6%
Others 1%

Source: HardwareZone.com Tech Awards 2013: Readers' Choice - Published February, 2013

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS - February, 2014

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
January 27 - 31	12:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Lark Creative Studios 835 S. Virginia Rd. , Unit A, CL	MCC Student Photography Exhibition	1
February 4	6:15 - 7:00 p.m.	Home State Bank 611 S. Main St., CL Community Room	"Drop in Early" Mentoring	2
February 4	7:00 p.m.	Home State Bank 611 S. Main St., CL Community Room	February CLCC Meeting and Competition Donuts and coffee are provided.	2
February 8	8:30 a.m.	Colonial Café 5689 Northwest Hwy., CL	Saturday Morning PhotoBug Breakfast meeting	3
February 11			Deadline for CLCC February competition winners to submit properly sized .jpg files for website	4
February 18			Deadline for March Newsletter inputs	5
February 25			Target date for March newsletter email distribution	

Notes:

1) Monday, January 27 by appointment only.

2) CLCC meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month. Home State Bank is located in Crystal Lake. It's the large building behind the drive-up just southeast of the intersection of Route 14 and Main Street. The Community Room is on the lower level - take the elevator just inside the south entrance.

3) The PhotoBug Breakfast meeting provides an opportunity for open conversation related to photography in general, plus good food, and fun. Who knows, you may take home some great tips and ideas that help you capture better pictures. Don't dress up – it's all informal. It's a great way to get to know the club members on a more personal level too. This event is held at 8:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month.

4) Email to richbickham@comcast.net for forwarding to webmaster in one batch - maximum image height is 768 pixels, maximum image width is 1024 pixels.

5) Email to richbickham@comcast.net .

NEXT MONTH

March, 2014 Events:

- March 4, 2014 - CLCC Monthly Meeting @ Home State Bank, CL - *Jim Pierce* "Getting Crazy With Images" presentation (rescheduled from January meeting)

- March 8, 2014 - PhotoBug Breakfast @ Colonial Café, CL

HUMOR - LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

"Well, yes, we could fix it in Photoshop, but your arm would still be broken."