

# ALAMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

2012-2024

©

## November 2024 Newsletter

[www.alamancephoto.com](http://www.alamancephoto.com)

[www.facebook.com/alamancephotoclub](http://www.facebook.com/alamancephotoclub)



Photo by David Hall

### APC ACTIVITIES

Our club will be taking a different approach in 2024. While our Programs, PhotoShows and Field Trips will continue, all will be geared towards an overall theme of learning and practicing basic photography.

We will also be adding some workshops to the mix. We feel our planned activities will appeal to both novice and advanced photographers alike and provide an opportunity for us to learn more from each other.

See more about what we have planned for 2024 on pages 3 & 4. We hope this will be a fun and educational experience for all. – Your editor

## President's Comments—November 2024

By Keith O'Leary

Thanks to Jim Herrington of Hillsborough Photography for a great presentation last month. It was interesting to hear how he overcame the challenges of starting his own business and about the various cameras he uses and what he uses each for.

I hope you are enjoying the pleasant fall weather we have been experiencing lately and have gotten out and taken some new photos. November's PhotoShow theme is photos taken anywhere within our state of North Carolina. Looking forward to see what you submit.

Congratulations and thanks go out to Sean Leahy who has agreed to be our new Exhibit Chair. You will be hearing more from him in the months to come. Thanks Sean!

I love this time of year and am looking forward to our Christmas party which will be here soon. More details about that below in the newsletter. Make plans now to attend.

Stay well and happy shooting!

Keith O'Leary

## APC BOARD

President	Keith O'Leary	Exhibit Chair	Sean Leahy
Vice President	John Reich	Outings/Field Trips	Hugh Comfort
Secretary	<i>open</i>	Membership	Ken Sellers
Treasurer	George Siple	Web Master	Christie O'Leary
PhotoShow Chair	David Hall	Editor	Ray Munns

## 2024 Alamance Photography Club Activities

- Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>** Program: Sean Leahy – Birds from Colombia
- Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: The Rule of Thirds (and ‘Back to Basics’ Ice Cream Social)
- Mar. 18<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: Photograph **three (3)** of the following:  
Close-up of a person  
2 to 3 people interacting  
Action shot  
Animal shot  
Nature shot
- Apr. 15<sup>th</sup>** Program: George Bohannon – Camera Basics with a Twist of History
- May 4<sup>th</sup>** Field Trip/Workshop:  
Place: Burlington Arboretum  
Objective: Understanding Light & Exposure  
Exercise: Experiment with different light sources and exposure settings.
- May 20<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: One subject using 2 different light sources
- June 1<sup>st</sup>** Field Trip/Workshop:  
Place: Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro  
Objective: Understanding Depth of Field, Composition, Angle of View  
Exercise: Experiment taking same compositions with shallow (wide aperture) and deep (narrow aperture) depths of field and from different angles.
- June 17<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: One Subject with 2 Different depths of field
- June 29<sup>th</sup>** Field Trip/Workshop:  
Place: Burlington City Park  
Objective: Understanding Stop Action vs Motion Blur  
Exercise: Experiment taking stop action & capturing motion blur from same or similar subjects.
- July 15<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: Stop Action & Motion Blur of Same (or Similar) Subject
- Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: One subject from 2 different angles/perspectives
- Sep. 16<sup>th</sup>** Program: Photo Editing Demonstration/Workshop (Dan Walker)
- Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>** Program: Dr. Jim Herrington – Drone Photography
- Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>** PhotoShow: Photos from North Carolina
- Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Party, Slideshow, Buy/Sell/Swap

## 2024 Programs

JAN: Sean Leahy – Birds from Colombia

APR: George Bohannon – Camera Basics with a Twist of History

SEP: Photo Editing Workshop/Presentation (Dan Walker)

OCT: Jim Harrington – Drone Photography

## 2024 PhotoShows

FEB: The Rule of Thirds (and 'Back to Basics' Ice Cream Social!)

MAR: Photograph **three (3)** of the following:

Close-up of a person

2 to 3 people interacting

Action shot

Animal shot

Nature shot

MAY: One subject with 2 Different light sources

JUN: One Subject with 2 Different depths of field

JUL: Stop Action & Blur Motion of Same (or Similar) Subject

AUG: One subject from 2 different angles/perspectives

NOV: Photos from North Carolina

## **(Tentative) Field Trip/Work Shops**

5/4: Place: Burlington Arboretum  
Objective: Understanding Light & Exposure  
Exercise: Experiment with different light sources and exposure settings.

6/1: Place: Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro  
Objective: Understanding Depth of Field, Composition, Angle of View  
Exercise: Experiment taking same compositions with shallow (wide aperture) and deep (narrow aperture) depths of field and from different angles.

6/29: Place: Burlington City Park  
Objective: Understanding Stop Action vs Blur Motion  
Exercise: Experiment taking stop action and capturing blur motion from same or similar subjects.



## WEBMASTER NOTES

Don't forget to visit our website – [www.alamancephoto.com](http://www.alamancephoto.com) – for the latest information. And be sure to direct people interested in the club to our website.

**Christie O'Leary—Webmaster**

## Exhibit Announcement

Thank you to all the photographers who participated in our Fall exhibit: "The Beauty of Nature".

I hope you all were able to visit the exhibit. Our photographers captured the beauty of nature well.

Congratulations to Resi Forrest, Greg Harkins, and Hugh Comfort for selling a piece of their artwork.

This completes the exhibits for 2024. We are excited about the 2025 exhibits line up.

Please help me welcome Sean Leahy as the new exhibit chair.

Christie O'Leary - Interim Exhibit Chair

## Q4 2024 Personal Field Trip: Lakes and Ponds

Since we have had several group field trips at specific times and places in the spring and early summer, this will be a more general personal field trip, where you can apply the techniques we have been reviewing; and this one will run from September 1 to November 30, 2024. Both lakes and ponds are included, so that you do not have to know that apparently the dividing line between the two is 10 acres. These may be located any place you happen to find them; but the photos must be taken during the specified timeframe. And the lake or pond should be the subject, not the background for a different subject. Instructions for submission of up to 5 of your favorite photos will be provided by email at a later date.

Hugh Comfort—Outings/Field Trips

## November 18<sup>th</sup> PhotoShow

### “Photos from North Carolina”

#### David Hall, PhotoShow Chair

This month we are highlighting our own state. Everyone can submit up to 3 photos.

The 3 photos can be of any subject, taken at any time, if they have been taken in North Carolina.

#### Submission Guidelines

Number of Entries: Up to Three (3) entries per member.

Format: .jpg

File Naming: Please name your photos using the following format:

Firstname.lastname\_01, \_02, \_03

Examples: john.doe\_01.jpg john.doe\_02.jpg john.doe\_03.jpg

Size: Between 1 and 25 MB

Email: Send all images to [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com)

Email Subject Line: include the month of the PhotoShow and your name

Example: Photos for November PhotoShow – John Doe

Entry Deadline: Wednesday, November 13, 2024

#### **Please Note:**

*Submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines above may be returned.*

*If you have any issues with formatting or submitting, please let us know at [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com) and we will be happy to assist. Also, **let us know if your submitted photo is not acknowledged within a few days and/or by the deadline.***

## Christmas Slideshow

***You Can Send Your Photos for the Christmas Slideshow Now!***

Our December meeting will be a Christmas social for members...and spouses and significant others. This year we will be having a dessert bar, a video/slideshow of member photos and a Trade Show/Swap or Sell. We would encourage every member to submit photos for the slideshow.

1. Our December meeting/social will be held on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
2. Select up to 15 of your best pictures of any subject and email them to: [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com) no later than Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. In the Subject line --- "Christmas Show"
3. Photos 1MB to 25MB will display better.
4. Photos must be named as follows:  
FirstName.LastName\_nn  
Ex. John.Doe\_01, John.Doe\_02, etc.
5. Each photographer will be highlighted with their submissions in the slideshow.

Thank you,

*David Hall*

*PhotoShow Chair*



## Table Talkers

**Will resume in 2025**



**Mio Winkle**

## November Meeting Voting

We will be voting for two elected Board members at our November meeting. Information about both candidates is below and on the next page.

### Keith O'Leary (Candidate for APC President)



Keith's love for photography and photo editing is fairly recent as he was more interested in videography in the early 2000's. Over the years, he has videoed many weddings, birthday parties, ceremonies, talks, etc., and created picture/music videos for graduations, funerals, marriages, outings, church ministry projects, etc. He also loved converting analog media to digital up until a few years ago. He has produced countless DVDs over the years of all kinds of events and started creating Christian music lyric videos during the Covid years for his YouTube channel.

in the Covid years for his YouTube channel.

Sandra Whitesell invited him to attend an Alamance Photography Club meeting at a program held at Alamance Arts in 2018 by Dan Walker. After a couple of visits, he decided to join the club and within a short time became the PhotoShow Chair.

Keith started out with an entry level Nikon and now shoots with a Fuji X-S10 mirrorless camera. His main love is landscapes but enjoys shooting just about anything. He primarily uses InPixio Photo Studio 12 for photo editing and loves creating family calendars every year on mixbook.com. He enjoys meeting new people and continuing to learn more about photography from others.

Other interests include disc golf, (easy to moderate) hiking, watching movies and spending time with family.

Keith is an IT Manager over the billing system at LabCorp and has worked there for over 22 years. He lives in Gibsonville with his wife Christie of 30 years and their 26-yr old son, Christian, lives in Mebane.



## John Reich (Candidate for APC Vice President)



I have been married to the love of my life for 56 years. We have 2 children - Michelle and Marshall as well as 3 grandchildren - Adam, Addison and Connor.

I retired in 2011 after 41 years in the printing industry. Started out in Cost Estimating Dept. working up to Corporate Sales. Finalizing my career being self-employed the last 5 years.

My interests were raising Arabian horses, and hunting and fishing. We don't have horses any longer and we added camping to our list of interests now.

My interests in photography started when we started to travel and evolved into nature and wildlife photography. I consider myself a serious amateur. I have been an APC member since 2013.

## APC Membership Corner

November 2024

The holidays are fast approaching. Whether it is to let someone know how thankful you are to have them in your life or you are hoping to get a head start on your Christmas shopping, here is a suggestion to help you. Why not give the gift of a yearly membership? Any new member joining in November and December can also get the remainder of the current year included in their 2025 membership at no additional charge!!

Ken Sellers – Membership Chair  
Alamance Photography Club  
336-252-1113



## 45 days Left - Christmas Party December 16th

There are 45 days before our Christmas party!

This year:

- **We will only have a Dessert Bar.**
- **A dessert sign-up sheet link will be emailed in early December**, so watch your inbox so you can indicate what dessert item(s) you would like to bring. This sign-up sheet will update automatically; hence, let us bring a variety of treats. If you attend November's meeting, you will have first picks on the dessert you would like to bring.
- **Paper products and beverages will be provided.**
- **Your spouse or significant other is welcome to accompany you!** On the sign-up sheet you will be asked to list the number attending.
- **On your calendar, write in December 16<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm (doors open @ 6:30 pm) @ First Baptist Church of Burlington fellowship hall.**
- **A slideshow of submitted photos will be shown on the screens.**
- **Will include a table for members to show & tell, swap, sell or buy equipment from others.**

We are excited to see you and your spouse (*significant other*) at our annual Christmas Party!

Looking forward,

Christie O'Leary

Christmas Party Coordinator

# Alamance Photography Club Shirts



The following club shirts are available in size Large:  
A Black Polo shirt and the following colors in Tees:

Natural/Beige

Ice Grey

Indigo Blue

Maroon

Heather Cardinal



## Photos by George Bohannon

### Aurora Borealis



**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**

The two photos named Photo 1 and Photo 2 are from the aurora borealis as seen with long exposure photography just north of Mebane. Both images were taken Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> between 8:30pm and 9:00pm. These are 20 second exposures, ISO 800 and ISO 640, f/4 with a 20mm focal length. This is in no way representative of what you could see with the naked eye. You have to have long exposure camera settings or night mode on a cell phone camera to really see any vibrant colors.

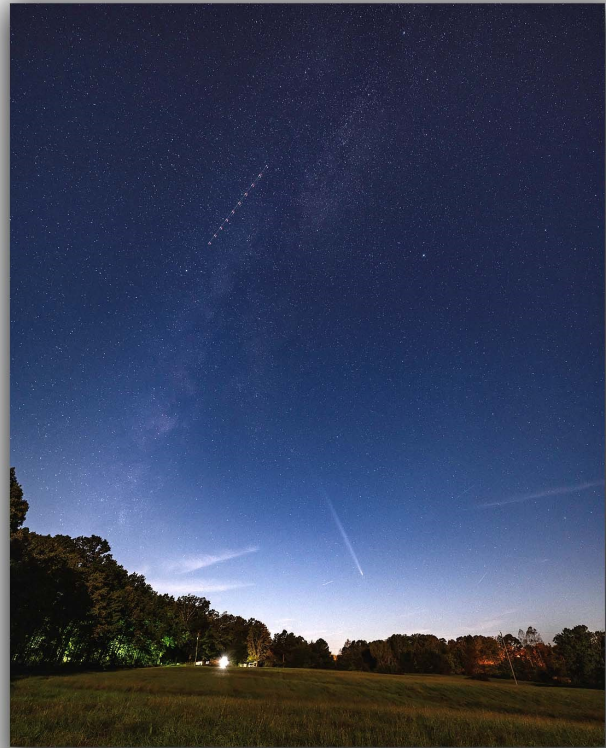
The colors vary depending on the types of gases in Earth's atmosphere and the altitude at which the aurora occurs. Green, the most common color, is produced by oxygen at lower altitudes (around 60-150 miles). Red, a rarer hue, comes from oxygen at higher altitudes (above 150 miles). Nitrogen emits purples, blues, and pinks, depending on altitude and energy levels. These colors result from the interaction of solar wind particles with gases in the ionosphere.



## Comet Tsuchinshan-ATLAS



**Photo 3**



**Photo 4**

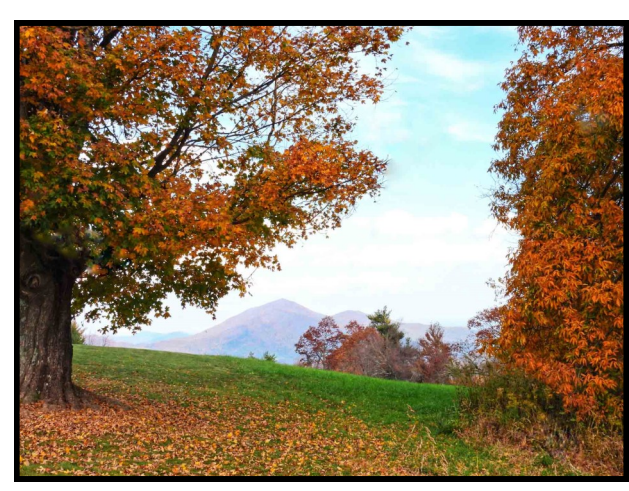
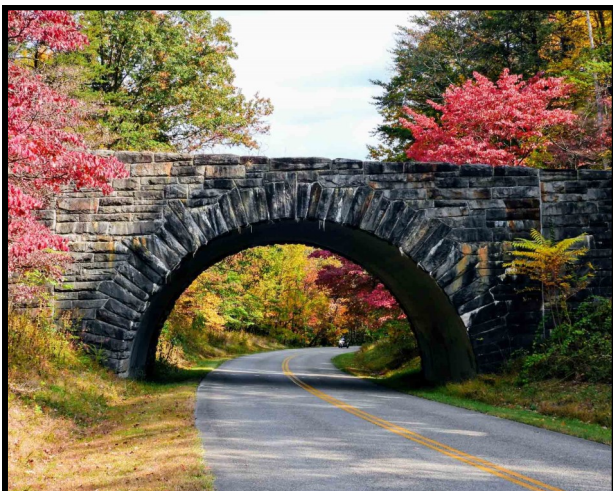
The next two images named Photo 3 and Photo 4 are from the Comet Tsuchinshan-ATLAS. Photo 3 was taken just north of Mebane on Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at around 7:50pm. This was a 15 second exposure, ISO 1600, f/4 and with a 75mm focal length. Photo 4 is a wide angle shot that shows the comet on the horizon. Higher in the image you can see the flashing lights of a passing airplane during the long exposure and a hint of the Milky Way. This was taken Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup> around 9:00pm in a very rural and dark sky section of southern Virginia. The light shine on the horizon is a combination of the remaining light from sunset and city shine from Danville Va. This shot was a 13 second exposure, ISO 1600, f/4 with a 20mm focal length.

George Bohannon



# Blue Ridge Parkway

Photos by John Reich



# APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns ([raymunns@bellsouth.net](mailto:raymunns@bellsouth.net)) no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please include your name, contact info (phone and/or email) and if each item is for sale or something you are looking to purchase. Also notify Ray when items should be removed from the newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

**David Hall (dlhallofnc@gmail.com or 919-840-8198)**

## ***Cokin Filters – for “P” System***

ND Grad Kit --- \$26 / OBO

- Filter Holder
- Filters – Graduated Neutral Density
- ND Grad Soft [3 f.stops]
- ND Grad Med [2 f.stops]
- ND Grad Light [1 f.stop]

Adapter Rings with Caps --- \$7.50 each / OBO

- 52mm [extension ring]
- 55mm
- 62mm
- 67mm

## ***Domke Canvas Camera Bag***

This bag can hold two cameras and 6 lenses plus accessories. The four-compartment padded center insert is removable or adjustable. There are six pockets – two on the side and two on the front. The largest pocket runs the length of the bag. With all the pockets and compartments you can carry a lot of equipment and accessories. There is a removable shoulder strap and hand strap. There are O rings on the back for attaching to a backpack. The canvas is thick and rugged offering a good deal of protection.

The bag is in very good condition.

This bag currently sells for \$162.00 (B&H Photo) asking \$75





## APC Trading Post - cont.

For Sale:

Orion StarBlast 4.5 EQ Equatorial Newtonian Reflector Telescope, suitable for beginner astrophotography. Accessories include variable universal camera adapter kit, Orion AstroTrack DC Motor Drive, 6 mm and 15 mm eyepieces, and Celestron X-Cel LX 3x Barlow lens. \$150.

Contact George Siple @ 508-317-8454.

# SHUTTER SPEED

## CHEAT SHEET

THE LONGER THE SHUTTER SPEED, THE MORE LIGHT GOES TO THE SENSOR. USE **LONG SPEEDS** WHEN THERE ISN'T A LOT OF LIGHT, AND **FAST SPEEDS** WHEN YOU WANT TO FREEZE A MOMENT.

<b>1/4000</b>	- FAST ANIMALS, SPORTS	
<b>1/2000</b>	- SUNSET/SUNRISE	
<b>1/1000</b>	- RACES, EXTREME SPORTS	
<b>1/500</b>	- SLOWER SPORTS	
<b>1/250</b>	- CASUAL PHOTOGRAPHY	
<b>1/125</b>	- PANNING FAST CARS/VEHICLES	
<b>1/60</b>	- PANNING SLOWER OBJECTS	
<b>1/30</b>	- BLURRING MOTION	
<b>1/15</b>	- LOW LIGHT WITHOUT A FLASH	
<b>1/8</b>	- BLURRING MOVING WATER	
<b>1/4</b>	- BLURRING MOTION	
<b>1/2</b>	- EXTREME LOW LIGHT	
<b>1"</b>	- FIREWORKS	
<b>5-30"</b>	- LIGHT PAINTING	
<b>BULB</b>	- SKY/NIGHT TIME, LONG EXPOSURE	



# 7 Tips for Amazing Low-Angle Photography

By Peter West Carey

Low-angle photography gives us a completely different view of the world.

Most of our lives are spent well above ground level – by the time we are teenagers, we rarely find ourselves crawling around on the floor. Yet there's a whole other world down there, an alternative perspective that provides an eye-opening, even shocking, experience.

Therefore, when done well, a low approach can create genuinely striking shots. With a bit of low-angle compositional magic, you can show a boring, everyday scene in a new light.

But how can you capture beautiful low-angle shots? In this article, I share my top seven tips for amazing results, starting with:

## 1. Use your rear LCD



When taking low-angle photos, it's important that you start by acknowledging that you will not be able to look through your viewfinder most of the time. (A lot of the best shots are captured so low to the ground that only the smallest of frogs could take a peek!)

Instead, you'll need to compose via your camera's rear LCD screen. If possible, use a camera with a fully articulating or tilting screen; that way, you can frame each photo without needing to physically get down on your camera's level. (If you're serious about low-angle photography – that is, if you plan to do it regularly – and you don't have a tilting screen, you may want to consider purchasing a camera that does. This feature makes a huge difference!)

Shooting without a tilting LCD is hard but not impossible. You'll need to work partially by feel, but you can also do your best to get physically low to the ground and do approximate framing via the screen, even if you aren't able to achieve a perfect viewing angle.

## **7 Tips for Amazing Low-Angle Photography . . . Continued**

### **2. Use a wider lens**

Wide-angle lenses facilitate perspective distortion, which causes scenes to appear more expansive (as opposed to compressed). And this effect looks amazing in most low-angle photography, in part because it specifically emphasizes the low-angle effect. Yes, you can capture low-angle shots with a telephoto lens, but the down-low perspective will be less obvious, and you'll lose that sense of the scene rushing away from the viewer into the distance.

At the right is an example of a shot taken with a wide-angle lens.

So how wide is wide enough? If you're using an APS-C camera, a lens in the 10-22mm range will work beautifully, though you can also get great results with an 18-55mm or 16-50mm kit lens. If you're using a full-frame camera, a 24mm lens is a good choice, but for an even more extreme effect, try using a 16-35mm zoom or even a 12-24mm option.



### **3. Maintain a deep depth of field**

Almost by definition, a low-angle shot will have elements in the near foreground and the distant background – and the best photos tend to keep all of these objects in sharp focus. In other words, it's important that you maximize the depth of field in your photos so foreground and background objects are crisp and detailed.

One way to increase the depth of field is to back away from your foreground subject, but this is often counterproductive as it will destroy that breathtaking low-angle effect. So you'll instead need to narrow your lens's aperture.

Technically, you can just crank the aperture to f/22 (or whatever your lens allows), but this can actually decrease sharpness due to something called diffraction. The better move is to only narrow the aperture as much as you need; f/8 is a good starting point, and while you can stop down to f/11 or even f/16, watch out for diffraction. Ultra-narrow apertures such as f/16 also have another drawback: They require slow shutter speeds to keep the images well-exposed, so it's difficult to shoot without a tripod.

### **7 Tips for Amazing Low-Angle Photography . . . Continued**

My recommendation? Start with f/8 and see what you get. Even if the shots aren't perfectly sharp from front to back, as long as the foreground and background objects are relatively clear, you'll still end up with a usable shot. This next image isn't perfectly sharp throughout, but the depth of field is large enough that the composition works well.



#### **4. Make sure your camera is level**

Whenever you set your camera low to the ground, don't just compose and immediately fire your shutter. Instead, take an extra second to ensure your horizontal lines are perfectly straight.

A crooked horizon is one of the easiest ways to tell beginners from professionals, so believe me when I tell you that you should avoid a tilted frame at all costs.

Now, it's true that you can straighten a crooked horizon in pretty much any editing program. But the straightening process will crop your image, which means you'll lose information around the edges. This isn't always a problem, but it can be, so it's best to just get it right in the field.

Some mirrorless cameras actually offer electronic levels, but if this isn't an option, you can always purchase a little bubble level that mounts on your camera's hot shoe and makes leveling a quick and painless process.

## *7 Tips for Amazing Low-Angle Photography . . . Continued*

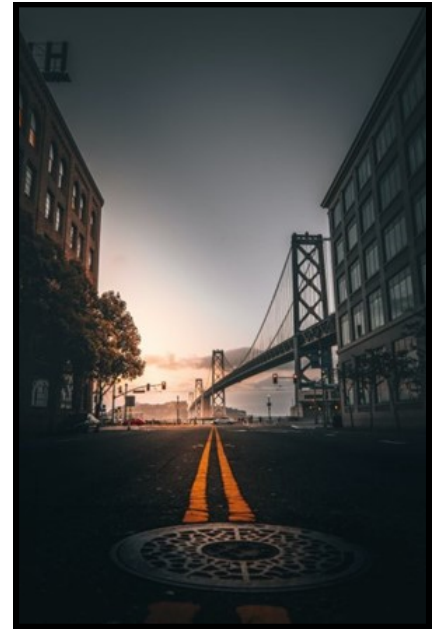
### **5. Watch for blown-out skies**

Because low-angle shots are, well, low, they often include a portion of the sky in the frame, like this.

After all, to capture the shot, you're pointing your camera up from down low.

Including the sky isn't necessarily a bad thing (and it can enhance your shots by adding interest or creating cool foreground silhouettes). But if you're not careful, you'll end up with a white, detailless sky, which often doesn't look so great.

You see, skies are generally far brighter than foregrounds, and because every camera has a limited dynamic range, it's often difficult to include detail throughout the entire frame – dark foreground and bright sky. Because many low-angle shots include more foreground than sky, your camera will often automatically expose for the foreground and turn the sky bright white.



Fortunately, there are a handful of techniques you can use to deal with this problem:

You can choose your exposure values extremely carefully so as to strike a perfect balance between foreground and sky. As long as your camera's dynamic range is large enough and you choose your exposure values carefully enough, you can retain detail in both the sky and the foreground.

You can shoot multiple bracketed frames, then blend the files together in an editing program. This process is time-consuming and works best if you shoot from a tripod, but you can also keep your framing consistent by placing your camera against the ground.

You can accept the limits of the scene. In other words, you pick between underexposing the foreground or overexposing the background and roll with it. If the sky is highly interesting, underexpose to maintain cloud detail. If the foreground is incredible, overexpose and accept that the sky will be blown out.

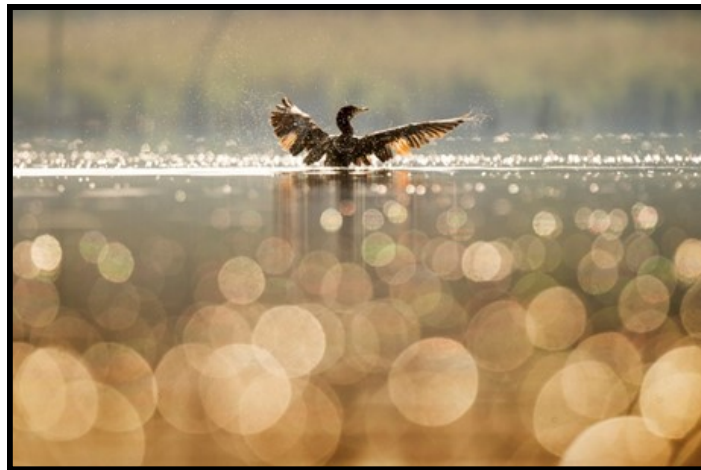
Regardless of the approach you choose, make sure you pay careful attention to the sky. A well-rendered sky can be the difference between a great shot and a bland one!

## 7 Tips for Amazing Low-Angle Photography . . . Continued

### **6. Include a clear subject**

While a low-angle perspective is very powerful, a shot that relies solely on the angle won't really impress the viewer. It's important to include a compositional point of focus in each image; that way, the viewer knows where to look!

Note that your point of focus can be anything: a rock, an apple, a bird, or a person. You don't necessarily need to include a breathtakingly beautiful or especially interesting main subject. As long as you have some element to catch the viewer's eye, your shot can work.



Note that a low perspective will often make small objects look huge – as if they're towering over the camera. This can be a great way to impress the viewer and make them feel like a tiny insect surrounded by giants.

One tip: Make sure you position your subject carefully in the frame. If the main area of interest is right in the middle of the shot, the composition might feel a little static. Consider using the rule of thirds to add some dynamism!



## 7 Tips for Amazing Low-Angle Photography . . . Continued

### 7. Shoot, review, and repeat

This is where the digital photographic process can be wildly helpful. While I'm not a fan of reviewing every shot on a camera's LCD, learning rapidly from your mistakes has never been easier. Take advantage of this technology!



As soon as you've taken a few shots, peek at the back of your camera and see what you think. How is the exposure? The composition? The sharpness? The lighting? Consider what you might change to make the image better, and reshoot until the image you want is captured. Over time, you'll get better at nailing each and every photographic variable so you can get each shot right from the start, but when you're just a beginner, your camera's playback function will be invaluable.

Repeatedly reshooting a subject will result in quite a few duplicate images, so you'll have your photo-organization work cut out for you. When you get back home, make sure you select the best shots and separate them from the rest. (If you like, you can delete all the failed shots, though you should be very careful; there's always the possibility that you'll change your mind about an image or two later on!)

You should also spend time reviewing your best images so you can understand precisely what made them so great. Thanks to this thoughtful analysis, you'll become better and better at identifying opportunities for low-angle photos.

### **Low-angle photography: final words**

Now that you've finished this article, you know how to capture breathtaking photos from a low perspective.

So head out with your camera, get down in the dirt, and see what you can create. Photograph people, animals, trees, flowers, buildings, street scenes, and more. It'll be a ton of fun – I guarantee it!



# How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide

By John Rogers

So... you get pretty good results shooting in natural light, but every time you use your flash, you suck. Washed out faces and dark backgrounds, yuck! You know it's time to master flash lighting, but who can afford expensive studio lights, soft boxes, backgrounds, etc.?



Three Speedlights Used: 105mm lens, F7.1 x 1/200 sec., ISO 400, WB 6000K. 3 speedlights bounced off of 3 white plastic 4' x 4' DIY reflectors attached to 3 walls of the baby's bedroom. One is behind the camera, one left and one right of camera, slightly behind the baby.

You don't need all that stuff to get professional results. Bounce your speedlights on location. Almost any quality of light can be produced when you know how.

Bouncing light usually softens it. (Bouncing into mirrors and shiny surfaces are the exceptions.) Softness or hardness of the light is determined by the size of the surface the light is bounced off of. The larger the surface, the softer the light is.

One On-Camera Speedlight Used: 150mm lens, F5.6 x 1/100 sec., ISO 400, WB 6000K. On-camera speedlight bounced against a 4' x 4' white plastic DIY reflector attached to a wall, left of subject. A small mirror close to subject created the bright highlight on the baby's head.



## *How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued*

**This article demonstrates the following techniques:**

- ◆ Bouncing one speedlight
- ◆ Bouncing multiple speedlights
- ◆ Light modification and control
- ◆ Lighting in tight quarters
- ◆ Creating a lighting ratio
- ◆ Dragging the shutter

### **Keys to Effective Bouncing**

1. Neutral color – Avoid nasty color shifts
2. Create a lighting ratio – Not just flat, boring light
3. No hot spots in the image area (blown out white areas where the direct flash is striking)

### **Neutral Color**

Bouncing works wonderfully when the bounce surface is neutral in tone, preferably white. Unfortunately, with modern construction there are few white walls available. Avoid bouncing light off of colored surfaces. The light you create will be the same color and probably cause you post-production nightmares.

Ceilings are usually white, but just bouncing off the ceiling can cause shadowed eye sockets (raccoon eyes). You need some light to strike your subject from a lower angle. Seek out the white areas of interiors, such as doors, window shades, etc. You can also drape a door or tall furniture with a white sheet to bounce light off of.

A white reflector on a stand is a better solution; position it anywhere. In tight quarters attach DIY plastic reflectors to walls. The camera should usually be 3–10 feet from the bounced surface. Rotate the speedlight head to the perfect bounce angle (similar to a bank shot in billiards). Remember, the closer the distance between speedlight and bounced surface, the harsher the light will be.



## *How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued*

### DIY Lightweight Plastic Reflector

4'x4' white plastic DIY hanging reflector (only weighs 5 oz.)



1. Buy a large rectangular 54" x 108" plastic table cover (under \$2.00) at a party supply store.
2. Fold it in half and tape together with two-sided heavy duty tape (carpet tape).
3. Temporarily attach it to a wall with the same stuff – careful not to do any damage! Remove slowly!

### Lighting a Subject with a Complicated Background

The best way to evenly light a background is by bouncing light off a white ceiling.

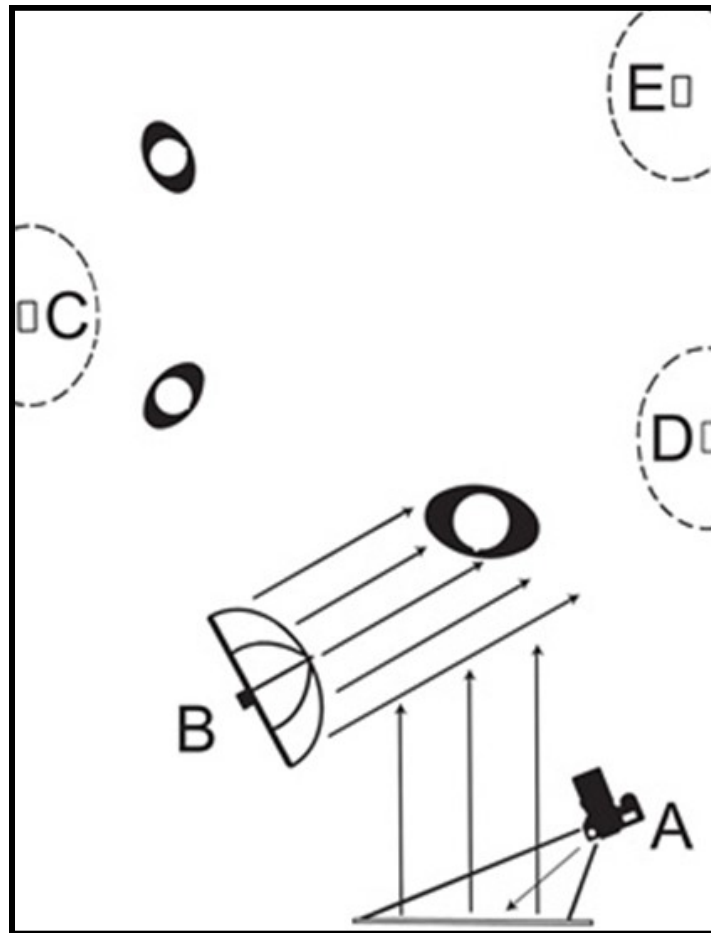
Five Speedlights Used. See Setup Details on next page.

*-100mm lens, ISO 400, WB 6000K,  
f/7.1, 1/200 sec.*



### How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued

Use snoots to shield direct light from striking your subject(s) and visible background.



**A.** On camera “Master” speedlight (set on manual) rotated and bounced off a white reflector for fill light. Light set at  $\frac{1}{2}$  power.

**B.** Speedlight placed into an Umbrella Softbox for the main light. Set at  $\frac{1}{2}$  power.

**C.D.E.** Speedlights were positioned out of camera frame with short snoots attached and aimed upward bouncing light off the white ceiling. Lights provided background and accent lighting. All three lights set at full power.

## *How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued*

### **Lighting Ratio**

A lighting ratio is the comparison of the main light to the fill light. The light from your speedlight can be either. When the flash is brighter than the existing (ambient) light it becomes the main light and the ambient light is the fill. When your flash is less bright than the ambient the reverse happens (flash = fill; ambient = main).

A photograph is more dramatic when the main and fill light are not the same brightness. The greater the difference between the two, the higher the lighting ratio (more contrast).

Bouncing light usually creates a large light source. Sometimes too large! Super large light sources can create flat, boring light (like an overcast day). Move your flash closer to the bounce surface to increase the contrast (higher lighting ratio).

Don't bounce your flash directly behind you, except for fill light. Angle it to your left or right, side lighting your subject.

### **Lighting in Tight Quarters**

One On-Camera Speedlight Used

*16mm lens, f/8, 1/50 sec., ISO 800,  
WB 6000K.*



Light bounced behind the camera into a 4' x 4' white plastic DIY reflector. Shutter dragged @ 1/50 sec. to back light the subjects. Built-in wide panel pulled over front of flash head for maximum light spread.

## *How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued*

### **No Hot Spots**

Another problem (especially noticeable when shooting with a wide angle lens) is hot spots in the image area (blown out white areas where direct flash is striking). The simplest solution is to crop them out of the photograph. This is easier to do when using medium and longer focal length lens.

Dog-gone-it! Sometimes you just have to shoot wide. Wide angle shots can be very dramatic. The problem is that lots of background shows in the frame. How do you hide the hot spots? The answer is to control the shape of the light you are creating.

You can zoom your flash to its longest focal length, flag the light with something opaque or snoot your speedlight. The best solution is usually snooting. Zooming is less precise and flagging requires cumbersome equipment and takes forever (unless you just flag the speedlight.)

A **snoot** is a tube shaped light control device placed on the end of your speedlight. It creates a circle of light with defined edges. Snoots are easy to make. Buy 2 mm thick black craft foam and give it a try. The longer the snoot, the smaller the circle of light. It needs to be loose enough to slide up and down but tight enough not to fall off easily.

### **Speedlight Modifiers Used in Sample Photos**



Left – DIY Snoot; Middle – white/silver 60” pop-open reflector; Right – umbrella softbox

## How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued

### Dragging the Shutter



Two Speedlights Used

*70mm lens, F6.3 x 1/60 sec., WB 6000K*

- Off camera speedlight bounced off ceiling behind subject. Speedlight set to  $\frac{1}{4}$  power. It created background & hair light.
- On-camera speedlight rotated and bounced into light gray wall behind the subject. Speedlight set to  $\frac{1}{8}$  power. It created the fill light. No color cast since the wall was gray.
- Slow shutter speed (1/60 sec.) correctly exposed the x-rays and created the highlights on the doctor's face and hand. This is "dragging the shutter".
- Camera attached to a monopod for stability.



## How to Bounce a Flash: Professional Guide . . . Continued

### Creating a Lighting Ratio in Flat Open Shade



One On-Camera Speedlight Used

*155mm lens, f/5.6, 1/160 sec., ISO 400, WB 7000K*

A. Pop-open white reflector was leaned against a light stand approximately 6 feet from the cat.

The on-camera speedlight was set to E TTL+1, head rotated and aimed at the reflector. A 4 ½" snoot was attached to prevent direct light from striking the cat.

The bounced light created a nice lighting ratio adding interest to the flat lighting of open shade.

