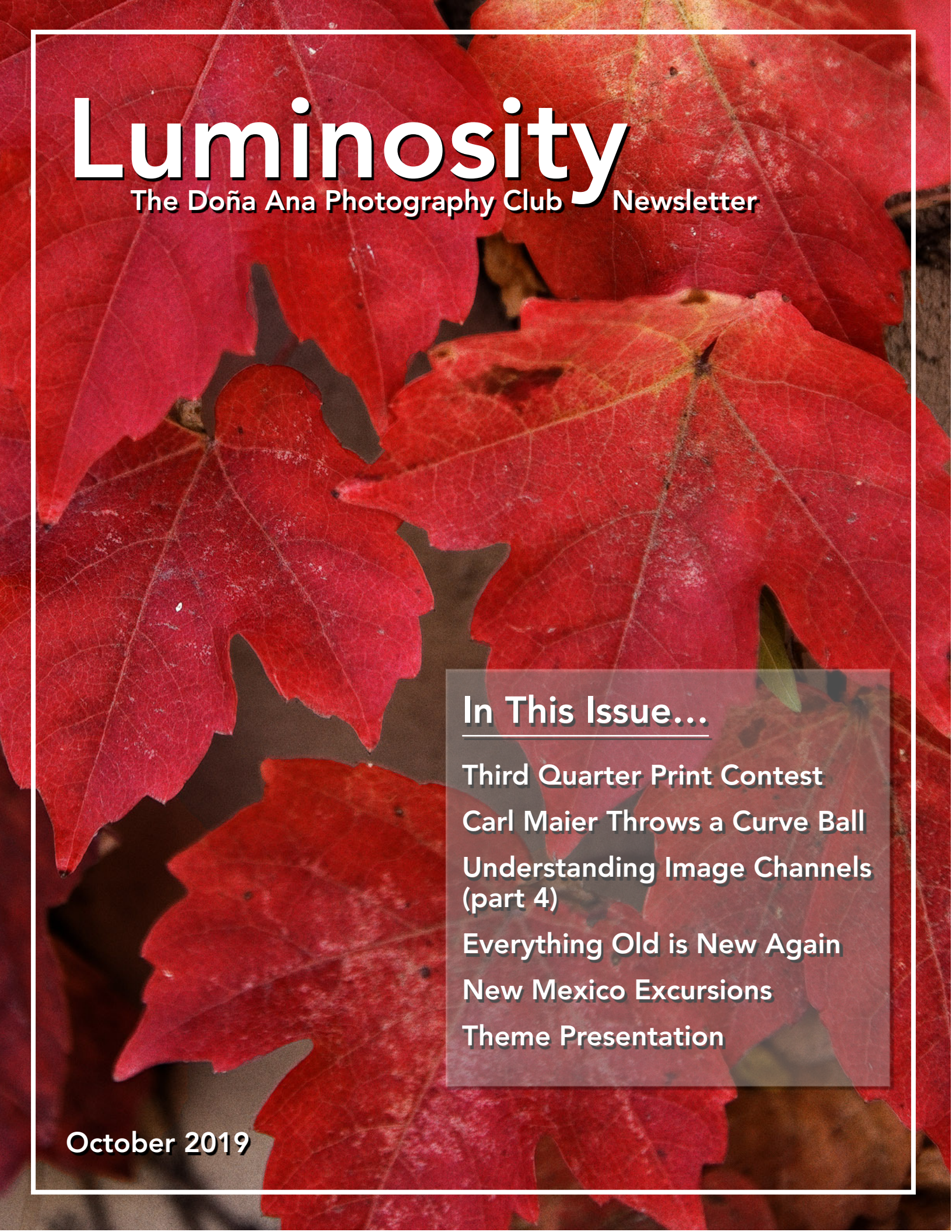

Luminosity

The Doña Ana Photography Club Newsletter

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October 2019

Doña Ana Photography Club
October 2019 Serving the Community since 1955 daphotoclub.org

Stunning Photos in the Third Quarter Print Contest

The DAPC third quarter Print Contest was held at the September 17 club meeting. There were 51 entries submitted. As usual, about one-third of the entries qualified for a ribbon. Half of those were blue ribbons; half were red.

Members brought in up to 3 of their photos for entry into the contest. Sign-in was done by Bill Hanson and Seth Madell who tracked photos and their creators, laying out the images in seemingly random order for members to view and for voting. Voting was done by all paid club members in attendance, and each member was allowed to cast a vote for up to 12 photos. The ballots were tallied by Bill Hanson after the voting, with final results announced at the end of the meeting. A list of Blue Ribbon and Red Ribbon winners is included below, and photos can be seen by clicking here. Congratulations are in order to all of you!

Don't forget – there's no Print Contest in the 4th Quarter, but submission for the Photo of the Year in November begins soon!

Blue Ribbon Winners - 3rd Quarter Print Contest

Red Ribbon Winners - 3rd Quarter Print Contest

[Blue and Red Ribbon Winner photos by Dave Brown]

Blue Ribbon Winners

Anne Chase
Robert Hamre (2)
Bill Hanson (2)
Carl Maier (2)
Richard Spingarn
David Turning
Maria Zucconi

Red Ribbon Winners

Alex Burr
Mitch Carleton
Gerald Guss (2)
Robert Hamre
Ryan Korpi
David Turning
Scott Winans

Mark Your Calendar...

October 1, 2019 - 6:30 pm
Regular Meeting - DAPC
Cruces Creatives
205 East Lohman Avenue.; Las Cruces, NM

October 1, 2019
Election of Officers
Takes place during the regular club meeting

October 12, 2019
Submission Deadline for Monthly Theme
"Stormy"
Send to Themes mailbox to participate.

October 15, 2019 - 6:30 pm
Regular Meeting - DAPC
Cruces Creatives
205 East Lohman Avenue.; Las Cruces, NM

Ribbon Winning Photos from the Third Quarter Print Contest

Sunset After Rain by Bill Hanson
Blue Ribbon

Who Dat? by Maria Zucconi
Blue Ribbon

Fried Chicken by David Turning
Blue Ribbon

Hummingbird by Carl Maier
Blue Ribbon

Golden Gamebird by Gerald Guss
Red Ribbon

On the Beach by Richard Spingarn
Blue Ribbon

Additional Print Contest Ribbon Winners...

Timpanogos Sunset by Robert Hamre
Blue Ribbon

Towards the Top by David Turning
Red Ribbon

Spring Cholla by Bill Hanson
Blue Ribbon

Snowy Soledad Sunset by Gerald Guss
Red Ribbon

View from a Train #6120 by Scott Winans
Red Ribbon

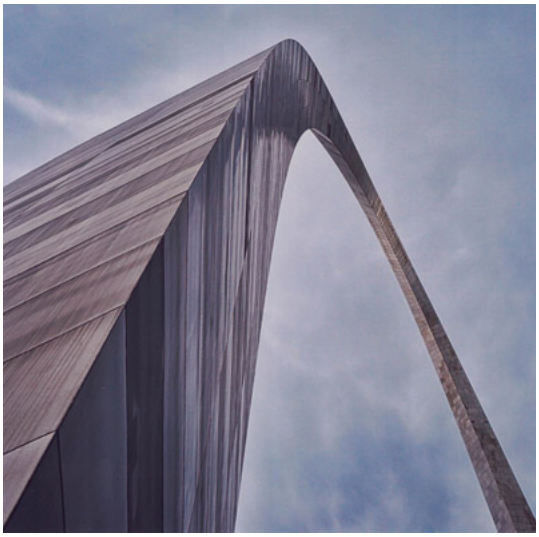
More Ribbon Winners from the Print Contest…

Sonoran Museum, Tucson AZ by Carl Maier
Blue Ribbon

Yo, Moses? by Robert Hamre
Blue Ribbon

Day Lily by Alex Burr
Red Ribbon

Front Row Seat by Robert Hamre
Red Ribbon



The St. Louis Gateway Arch by Mitch Carleton
Red Ribbon

Bureau of Land Management Seeking Photos for 2019 Photo Contest

The Bureau of Land Management Las Cruces District is sponsoring a photo contest and inviting public land users to submit their favorite photographs of a special landscape, plant, animal or object located on public land. The grand prize winner will receive a 2020 Las Cruces District Office Annual Pass valued at $30, with their photograph printed on it. The pass will allow the winner to visit and enjoy BLM's Dripping Springs Natural Area, Aguirre Springs Campground and Three Rivers Petroglyph Site.

"The secrets of public lands" is this year's theme and focuses on photographs from those remote and secluded areas that an individual and/or family has encountered, but their neighbor has not.

The photo contest will run from now to October 26, 2019. No more than three photographs per person can be submitted to sturman@blm.gov. A photograph description and location is requested. However, the BLM will not disclose the locations of the photographs or any personal information about the photographers.

For rules and more info, contact Sylvia Turman at (575) 525-4414 or at the email address above.

Carl Maier Throws a Curve Ball

DAPC's 2018 Photo of the Year Winner explains this complicated adjustment

by Carl Maier

We have all heard folks say, "The Curves tool found in most image editing programs is the most powerful tool we can use for adjusting tone, contrast and color." Most people, after opening Curves for the first time, take one look at its interface and quickly relegate the adjustment to the deepest recess of their computer, never to see the light of day again.

At the September 3 meeting, Carl Maier gave a presentation about the Curves adjustment tool. He discussed a bit of its pre-digital background, and then presented a slow introduction to the Curves interface. Carl discussed how the movements of points on the adjustment panel relate to a live image on the screen.

He compared Curves to the Levels tool – one that most people are comfortable using – and demonstrated that Curves is indeed more capable. Furthermore, he showed the Curves adjustment to be the more effective tool for enhancing virtually any of our images.

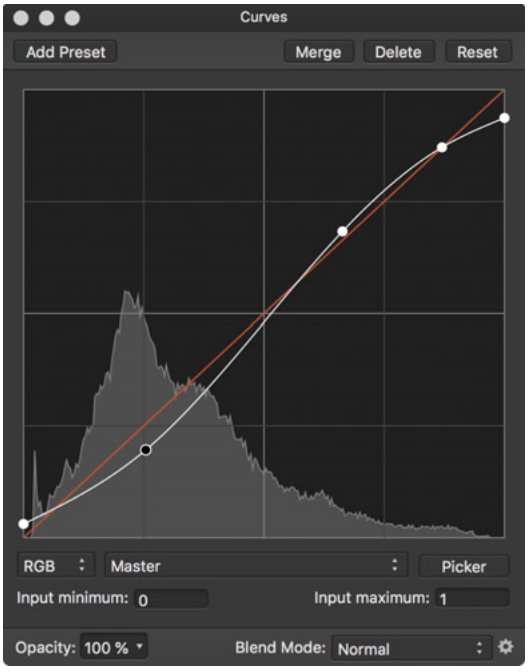
Carl explains the Curves adjustment at the Sept 3 meeting

Carl demonstrated the Curves adjustment by using a step by step approach. He also demonstrated some time- and headache-reducing tips for using Curves, as well as his method for using the Curves adjustment combined with masking.

No one can become a master at using Curves by watching a 40 minute presentation. However, Carl laid out the basics of this adjustment's use, and showed Curves to be a friend, not some monster waiting to destroy your photo and your confidence.

Carl reminded us all of his favorite expression, which goes, "Practice, practice, then practice some more." You will be glad you did, and it will show in your work.

A photo that needs contrast, and adjustment of black and white output



The Curves adjustment is used to solve the photo's tonal problems

The photo looks much better after application of the Curves adjustment

Channel Surfing – Part Four

Practical editing using the Red, Green, and Blue color channels

by Seth Madell

We began this investigation into image channels with an explanation of color channels. Our photos are composed of differing amount of three primary colors – red, green, and blue. Color channels allow us to split a photo into a monochromatic version of each of its primary colors. We can work with an individual color channel in ways that are similar to working with an entire photo. This gives us power to shift, grade, and transpose colors that might not be possible without using individual channels.

Parts 2 and 3 of our journey dealt with alpha channels, and we began to look at selections, opacity, and masks as inter-related forms of these strange creatures.

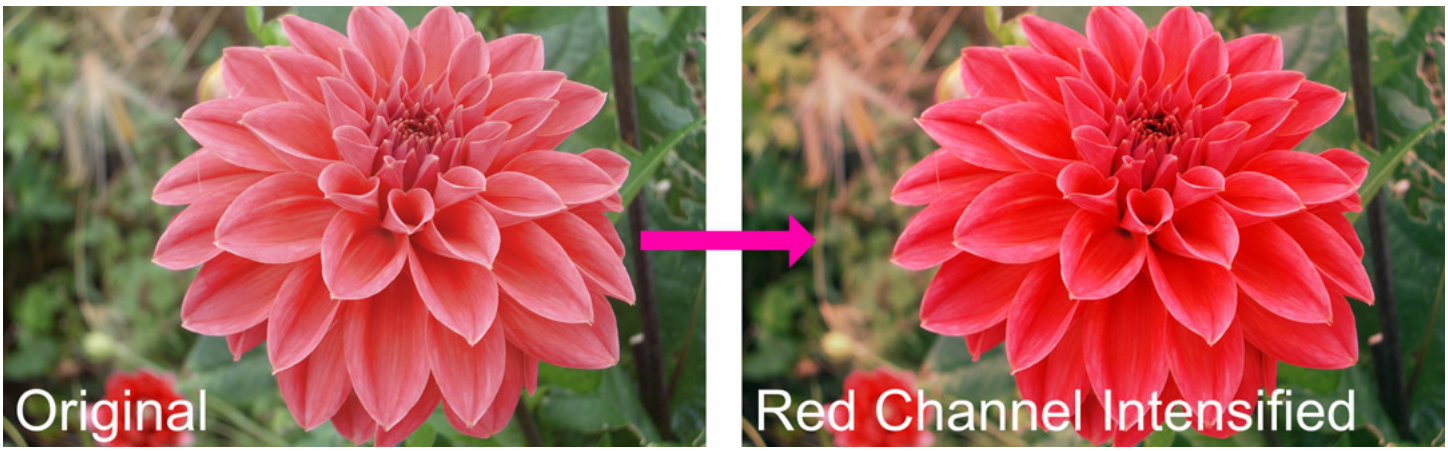
In Part 4 of this series, we're going to look at some of the ways that color channels can be used in realistic editing scenarios. We will talk about operations on individual color channels, color grading using channels, channel swapping, and (as an introduction to Part 5) using a color channel to aid in creating a selection.

Editing Individual Color Channels

Different software applications will have different methods for isolating a color channel for editing. In Affinity Photo the Channels panel has an eyeball and a pencil icon next to each of a photo's composite channels. These can be used to toggle visibility of the channel, and to choose which channel(s) are being edited. Other software applications access individual color channels in different ways.

As an example, examining the color channels of a sky might reveal it to be quite noisy but, since it is likely to be the red and green channels that are of lower intensity (i.e., "darker" in a monotone representation), the noise might be more prominent there while the blue channel remains relatively free of noise. Apply a noise reduction filter to the red and/or green channels can get rid of noise without affecting any of the clarity of the blue sky.

Some editing adjustments also have the ability to target specific color channels rather than affecting them all equally. A photo of a red flower might benefit from intensifying the reds while diminishing the prominence of the greens and blues.



The Red Channel has been isolated and the saturation increased

Color Grading and Balancing

Some editing adjustments can be applied not only to all of the color channels, but can also be applied to individual color channels. In Affinity Photo, the Curves and Levels adjustments are typically used to affect all pixels evenly. However, it is common for these adjustment to offer the possibility of changing the tonality of the Red, Green, and Blue channels independently of each other. Doing so can affect the color balance of a photo, which can be an effective

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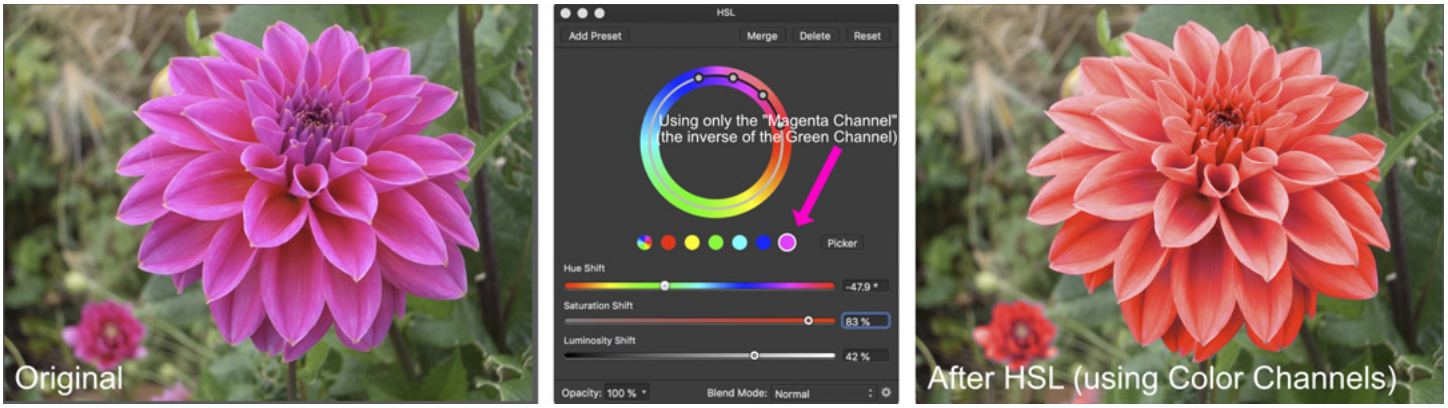
way to manage color grading and color matching. You might want to check out this YouTube video from PixImperfect that outlines a way to grade skin tones using the Curves adjustment layer.

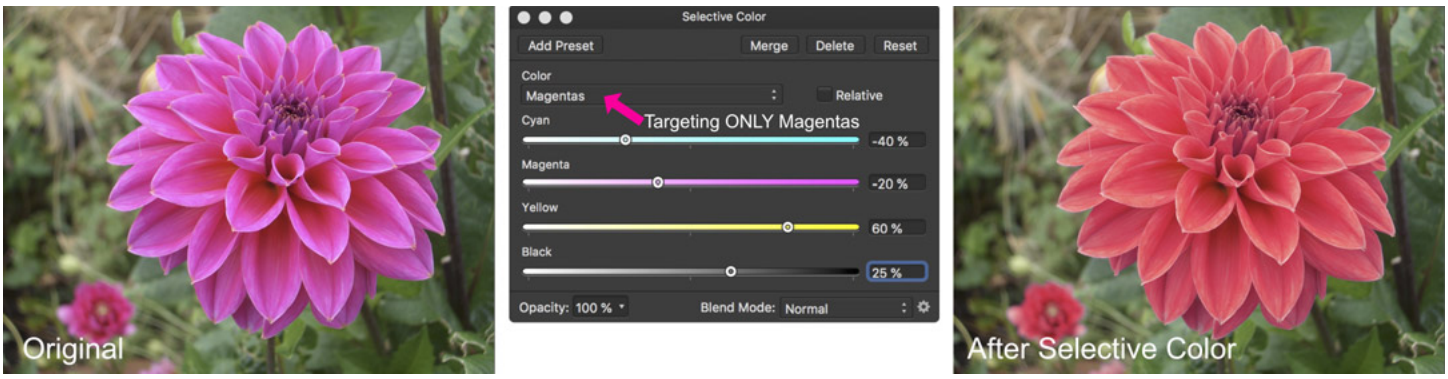
The Curves Adjustment is used to change the tonality of all 3 Color Channels independently

The HSL (Hue, Saturation, Luminance) adjustment is another adjustment that can not only be applied to all channels, but can target specific color channels one at a time. In our flower example above, the HSL adjustment can be targeted to just the Red channel, and the saturation increased. This leaves the green and blue channels alone, and simply effects changes in the red channel.



The HSL (Hue, Saturation, Luminance) Adjustment is used to change the values for a single color channel

The Selective Color adjustment can also change the color balance in specific color channels. Although a bit of an esoteric adjustment, one can target specific color outputs (for instance, the "magenta channel" in the example shown) and alter the input.



The Selective Color Adjustment is used to change the color inputs for a single color channel output

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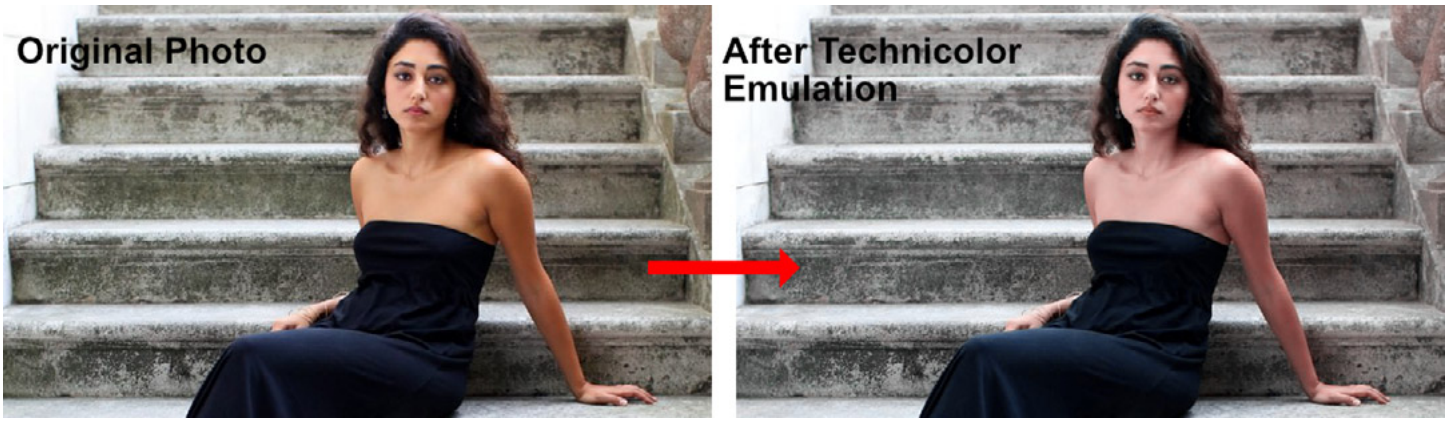
Channel Swapping

Channel swapping is a technique used in processing infrared photographs, and in certain other "looks," such as emulating Technicolor processing. When using the channel swapping technique, one channel is mapped to the other and vice versa. For instance, in the Infrared emulation, the Red and Blue channels are swapped. In other words, the values for Red and Blue are switched; all the reds become blue, and all the blues become red.

The Channel Mixer is used to swap the Red and Blue channels in this Infrared Emulation



This Technicolor Emulation uses Red/Blue channel swapping as a part of its color grading

Using Channels for Selections

Sometimes a single color channel can form the basis for a selection. This is especially helpful when it comes to creating masks, and this topic starts to blur the boundary between using color channels and using alpha channels. Particularly when trying to substitute a sky, making an excellent selection can make or break the realism of a mask.

In the example shown, the Blue Channel was isolated, since it forms the best contrast between the sky and the foreground. A greyscale layer was created out of the blue channel, and very light editing was done to make the foreground completely black and the sky completely white. (For those who are interested, a Levels adjustment was made to make the

A mask is created starting with the Blue Channel, which makes isolating a selection of the sky much easier

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Editing Color Channels: *continued from page 9*

highlights whiter, the shadows darker, and the mid-tones darker as well. Then, a brush set to Overlay mode painted in black and white to complete the transition to a wholly black and white layer.) Once that was complete, the layer can be converted to a mask. In Affinity Photo, the *"Rasterize to Mask"* command was used; in Photoshop and other applications, the process will be slightly different.

How Do We Finish?

We're almost there. Next month, Part Five will explore the use of Alpha channels as a practical part of photo editing. In truth, this is what this series has been leading up to. Alpha channels are where we create masks, and masking is a crucial skill for anyone who wants to do anything beyond the most elementary of photo editing. Bear with me - next month's entry will make it all worthwhile.

Image Icons

Historic and Inspiring Photos that Evoke an Event or an Era

The Situation Room - Pete Souza

Pete Souza was the White House photographer during the Obama administration and, as such, had extensive access to areas and events that "mere mortals" would never dream of documenting. One such event occurred during the late afternoon of May 1, 2011, when President Obama, Vice President Biden, and the national security team crammed into the White House Situation Room watching live updates from an overhead drone in Afghanistan. The group was watching the live unfolding of *Operation Neptune Spear*, which led to the killing of Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda.

The photo was taken at 4:06 pm Washington DC time, corresponding to 12:36 am local time in Afghanistan. It is thought that this picture was taken at about the time that one of the raid's helicopters crashed while breaching bin Laden's compound.

Although it was widely reported that Obama, and others, watched the exact moment that bin Laden was killed, this was not the case. No video feed was available once the SEAL's entered the house, and this added to the intensity of emotion that is evident in the photo.

Many have also commented on Hillary Clinton's expression, holding her right hand over her mouth with apparent anxiety over the raid's outcome. *The New York Times* commented on Clinton's expression, writing, "She is what the French critic Roland Barthes called the '*punctum*,' the not necessarily conspicuous detail that gives a photograph its emotional resonance." For her own part, Clinton described the event as "the most intense 38 minutes of my life," but also notes that holding her hand over her mouth more likely represented the suppression of a cough from her Spring allergies.

The photo has been called "a photo for the ages" and has been compared to other famous images of US presidents, such as the *Dewey Defeats Truman* photo in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1948.

Everything Old is New Again

Doña Ana Photography Club finds a new home at Cruces Creatives

by Dave Brown

The Doña Ana Photography Club has found itself a new home. Located at 205 E. Lohman Ave. here in Las Cruces, Cruces Creatives is found in the building previously occupied by Las Montañas Charter High School.

Cruces Creatives is a so-called makerspace, and recently celebrated their one-year anniversary in Las Cruces. Analogous to a gym, where one pays a monthly fee to use its exercise facilities and classes, a makerspace is a place for members to concentrate on building. Member projects involve wood and metalworking, textile creations, audio-visual, electronic, and robotic work, as well as computing and other projects. The facility is segregated into various rooms and other discrete spaces, based on specific types of activities.

The August 20 meeting was the first time that the club met at its new address. Thanks to the efforts by Dale, Fred and others, the assembly room had been set up and was ready to go. The room is an L-shaped space which presents at least several ways to orient the seating and screen placement. Odds are quite good that different arrangements will be tried to see how they work out before settling on a stable setup.

Those in attendance found that, although the venue was different, members who arrived early had a chance to engage in the normal pre-meeting conversation. Also, the Pet Photography program and theme presentation were able to stimulate significant discussion.

Cruces Creatives relies on attendance statistics to receive some of its grants and funding. Because of this, all of us will need to check in and out at the Main Desk upon arriving and leaving the facility. Also of note, there is an abundance of expensive equipment on site and the location relies on trained "monitors" to ensure that closing is accomplished properly. Because of this, we must be out of the building by 9:00 pm.

In order to accommodate their needs, meeting times have been moved up by 30 minutes – now beginning at 6:30 and ending at around 8:30.

all photos on this page by Dave Brown

Excursions

New Mexico Photo Opportunities

October is for the Zombie Apocalypse

by Anne Chase

Every October Las Cruces hosts a Zombie Walk. It is a fun evening in which adults and children dress up in ghoulish costumes – the more outrageous and bizarre the better.

This year, the Zombie Walk will be held on Saturday, October 27 from 5:00 through 9:00 pm. People gather on the Plaza downtown and then join in the parade which takes place on Main Street between the roundabout at the north end and Griggs Ave. at the south end.

It is a great place to photograph people. Any lens is fine. Just try to isolate faces or your subject. A flash will give you catch lights in eyes and will be necessary at night during the parade.

Photos by Anne Chase (above, right) and Seth Madell (left and below, right)

Constructive Edits

Highlights and features of photo editing software for more interest and best results

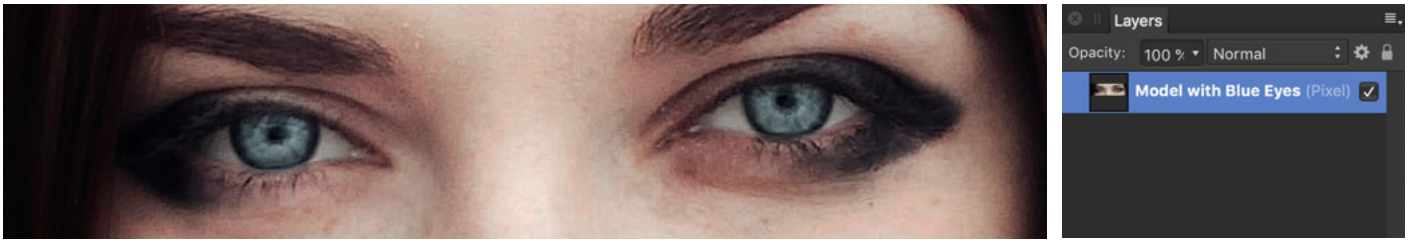
When photographing portraits, several things are important. Perhaps the most important thing to get right is to capture the subject's eyes – in focus, with the proper catch light, and with some expressiveness. While there are other areas of importance, if you don't nail the eyes the photo just doesn't work.

Once we've got expressive eyes with great focus, we might want to give them even more interest. We can add contrast, glow, even whiten the sclerae (but not too much!). What if we want to **change the color of the eyes**? How would we do such a thing?

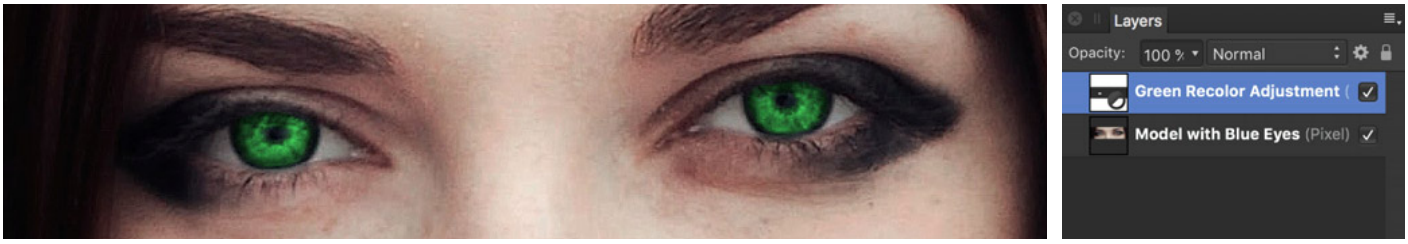
There are two simple methods to do this, and they are variants of the same thinking. One involves a color adjustment, and one involves painting on a pixel layer.

To change eye color with an adjustment, add either a Recolor adjustment (a "solid color" adjustment in Photoshop) or an HSL adjustment to the portrait. Set the new color as you'd like, and then add a completely black mask. This will negate the entire adjustment. Paint on the adjustment layer's mask with a white paint brush (with a soft edge – set the hardness to 0) and paint only the areas of the iris (the colored portion of the eye). This will allow the adjustment to become visible, and will restrict that adjustment to only the areas chosen.

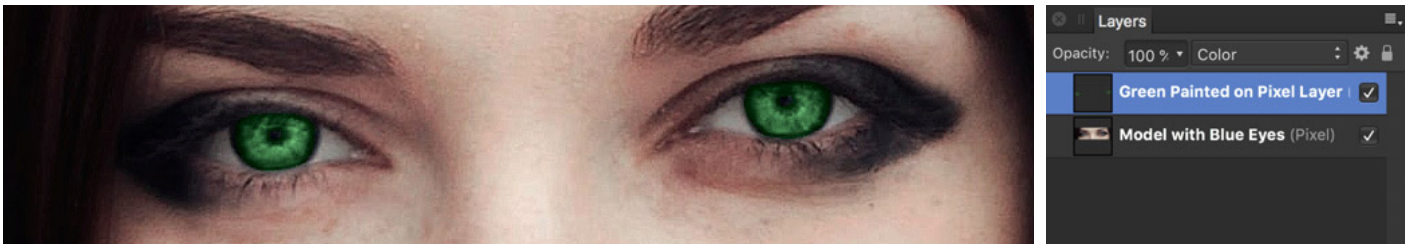
The second way to change eye color is to add a pixel layer above the portrait. Change the Blend Mode to "Color." This blend mode means that the new pixel layer will contribute its color to the underlying portrait, but the saturation and luminosity from the portrait layer will be used. In everyday language, this means that the new color will show up, but the differences in lightness and contrast from the original photo will still be there. Choose a new eye color, and use the paint brush to paint on the top pixel layer.



The original eyes and the Layers panel showing a single pixel layer with the image



A Recolor adjustment layer is added and everything but the eyes are masked. The Layers panel is also shown.



A pixel layer is added with a "Color" blend mode. The new green color is painted over the original eyes.

September Theme Presentation
Fauna

by Seth Madell

One of the club's recent presentations was all about Pet Photography. Kristi Dixon stressed some of the most basic principles of shooting animals (with a camera!) in her talk. Be patient; understand pet psychology; make sure your pet is well fed and well exercised, don't crowd the animal.

What if you're not photographing animals in your back yard, but instead on the Serengeti? Are there methods to getting good photos of animals in the wild? Not surprisingly, many of the same rules seem to apply.

Understanding the psychology of animals goes a long way, and familiarity is a positive two-way street. If you are familiar to the animals, they are more likely to tolerate your presence. They may even be playful while you're watching.

Gear matters. In your back yard, a 50 mm lens is plenty. But out in the wild, a telephoto lens with a tripod is almost a must. You just can't get as close to a cheetah or a pack of elephants as you can to your neighbor's beagle. Also, instead of buying that mega-expensive super-telephoto lens, consider buying a teleconverter to add focal length to an existing lens. Also, carrying around a tripod is best, but resting that long, heavy telephoto monster on just about anything stable is a suitable substitute.

Another thing to remember when photographing in the wild is that you not only need to get tight, up-close shots. You can definitely tell more of a story by including some wider angle photos – those that include the animals' environment. They can tell a huge part of the story, too.

And don't forget that there are great pictures happening even when the "kings of the jungle" aren't around. You may want to get great pictures of the lions and tigers and bears (oh my!), but the wilds are full of beautiful creatures, great and small, and photos of the smaller details can be amazing and compelling in their own way.

This month's presentation included 57 images submitted by 19 members. Subjects ranged from pets to wildlife to backyard critters.

Next month's theme is *Stormy*. Members should submit up to three images using the theme as your guide. Send them to Kristi Dixon at the Themes mailbox. Photos should be in JPG format and file sizes should not exceed 2MB. Keep them to 1080 pixels tall, or less.

The theme for November is *Faces–Real or Imagined* and the entire schedule of themes for 2019 can be found online here.

Strut Your Stuff **by Bob Hamre**

Lion Yawn, Kenya **by Ryan Korpi**

Breakfast **by Nirmal Khandan**

Announcements: *continued from page 16*

11-13 at the Hadley Sports Complex in Las Cruces. Tickets cost between $10.00 and $40.00 apiece, depending on dates.

The annual Harvest Wine Festival at La Viña Winery takes place on the weekend of October 19-20 from noon until 7:00 pm. There are over 20 wines available for tasting and purchase, and, as always, there is a steady flow of free music. Photos should be easy to come by. A map to the winery is available by clicking here and more information is available here.

The annual Mesilla Valey Maze is open from September 28 through October 27. Tickets are $12.00 per adult, $10.00 for children under 12, with children 2 years and younger admitted free. The Maze is located here and their website is available here. In the past, the maze has sponsored a Photo Contest; someone in our club really needs to claim the prize this year!

The Bureau of Land Management is sponsoring a Photo Contest. Click here for information.

The Shooting Menu

A discussion of camera functions & shooting techniques

Why spend a fortune on a pile of metal pick-up sticks? People with expensive tripods are always telling you to open up your wallet and buy an expensive tripod just like they did. Does it really matter? Or are they trying to convince you only to justify their own mistake?

If you don't own a tripod, or if you own a cheap one, borrow a friend's expensive tripod for an afternoon. It won't take more time than that to realize what you've been missing.

So, how do you **pick out a tripod**? The first thing to know is that this is one area where you really do get what you pay for. Buy a cheap tripod at your own peril; you won't be satisfied for long, and you'll be back in the market for a better tripod soon enough.

First of all, commit to buying the legs and the head separately. Then, know what to look for in each.

Tripod legs are a compromise between weight and portability; between cost and stability. If you can spring for a carbon fibre tripod, these are the most stable and the lightest, but also the most costly. Aluminum legs are less expensive, but can be heavier and a bit less stable.

Also consider the number of sections in a tripod. A tripod with more sections (usually as many as 5) can collapse to a smaller size, making it easier to carry. But more sections leads to less stability. A tripod with only 3 sections is far more stable, but will collapse to a larger size.

Manfrotto carbon fibre tripod with Kirk Ball Head

A high quality tripod system requires the separate purchase of a head. Instead of the integral pan-tilt head on a cheaper tripod, consider getting a ball head. Ball heads are easier to adjust, and tend to grip the camera in position without allowing it to slip. If you're going to use heavy telephoto lenses, or if you're shooting video, consider upgrading further to a gimbal head.

Other things to look for are a quick release system for grabbing the camera (Arca Swiss is the standard), and bubble levels on both the tripod feet and the head.

The best tripods can be purchased from Gitzo, Manfrotto, Really Right Stuff, and a few others.

Announcements...

Upcoming Club Presentations

On October 1, Debbie Hands, Seth Madell, and Dale Taylor will present their edited versions of the same five photos. Each panelist will explain what portions of the photos they changed, and what methods they used. Also on October 1, the Election of Officers for 2020 will take place.

The October 15 meeting will include Anne Chase's short talk about "Where to Shoot in November." Other items for that evening are still pending.

Shoot for the Stars at Spaceport America

Our club will sponsor a field trip to Spaceport America between September 25-30, allowing for weather issues. We'd like to arrive in the early evening to set up for a night of astrophotography. A moonless sky and great foreground interest promise to make this lots of fun. More info at the September 17 meeting.

Photo Opportunities & Contests

The Mesilla Valley Jazz Blues Society is sponsoring its 19th Annual Jazz Happening on Friday October 4 through Sunday October 6. The event is billed to "promote the appreciation of Jazz and Blues art forms." It is free to the public, and takes place in the Old Mesilla Town Square. On Friday, from 6-9 pm, and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, a series of jazz bands will perform for your enjoyment and appreciation. More info is available by clicking here.

Take some music performance photos by attending the Las Cruces Country Music Festival on October

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About the Cover...

Photographer	Seth D. Madell
Name of Photo	Santa Fe for the Holidays
Date Taken	November 23, 2017
Photo Location	Near the Plaza in Santa Fe, NM
Camera & Lens	Nikon D750 Nikkor 24-120mm f/4 zoom
Shooting Info	f/4, 1/250 sec., ISO 120
Additional Info	Edited in DxO OpticsPro and Affinity Photo

All photographs remain the copywritten property of the individuals noted, and should not be used without specific permission from the photographer.

About the Photo Club

The Doña Ana Photography Club is a group of photographers and other people interested in photography. Our meetings offer technical presentations, friendly suggestions for improving your photos, networking, and other activities for a wide spectrum of photographers and abilities.

Visitors are always welcome to our monthly meetings and programs, which are designed to improve photographic skills at all levels. We meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month (except December). Our meetings are held at Cruces Creatives; 205 E. Lohman Avenue; Las Cruces, NM. Meetings begin at 6:30 pm and last about 2 hours.

Visit our website at: www.daphotoclub.org

DAPC is a proud member of the Photographic Society of America. We encourage you to consider becoming an individual member of PSA. For more information, please visit their website at *psa-photo.org* and see what they have to offer.

President	Dale Taylor	president@daphotoclub.org
Vice-President	Bill Hanson	vicepresident@daphotoclub.org
Secretary	Terry Gaume	secretary@daphotoclub.org
Treasurer	Vince Gutschick	treasurer@daphotoclub.org
Public Relations	Carl Maier	publicrelations@daphotoclub.org
Programs Chair	Anne Chase	programs@daphotoclub.org
Member Service	Fred Moore	membership@daphotoclub.org
Photo Theme	Kristi Dixon	themes@daphotoclub.org
Newsletter	Seth Madell	newsletter@daphotoclub.org
Exhibits	Open	exhibits@daphotoclub.org
Website	Debbie Hands	webmaster@daphotoclub.org
Member-at-Large	Dave Brown	memberatlarge@daphotoclub.org