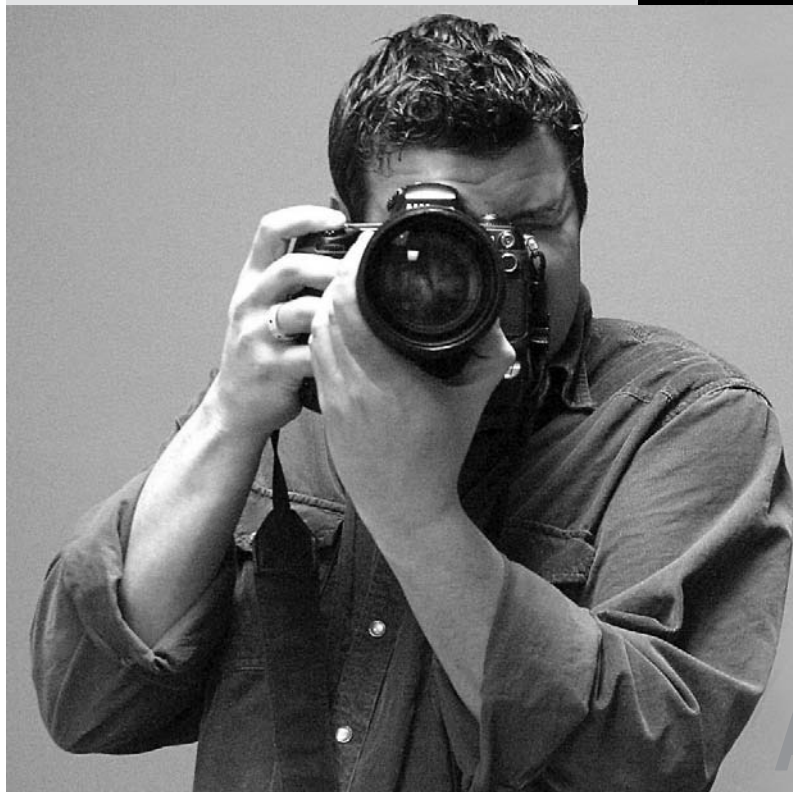


PhotoGRAPHY

FROM CAMERA
TO COMPUTER



The Argus-Press

Staff Photographer

ANTHONY CEPAK

Quick TIPS



Be aware of shadows and reflections

Take some time to look around and become aware of everything that's going on in a scene. Some times what's going on around what you are photographing is as interesting as the subject itself. Take the photo to the left for example. I was photographing a 3 on 3 basketball tournament at the Curwood Festival and noticed the strong shadows of the players on the pavement. Just by looking around and being aware I was able to make this picture, which I think is more interesting than if I had just photographed the kids shooting baskets.



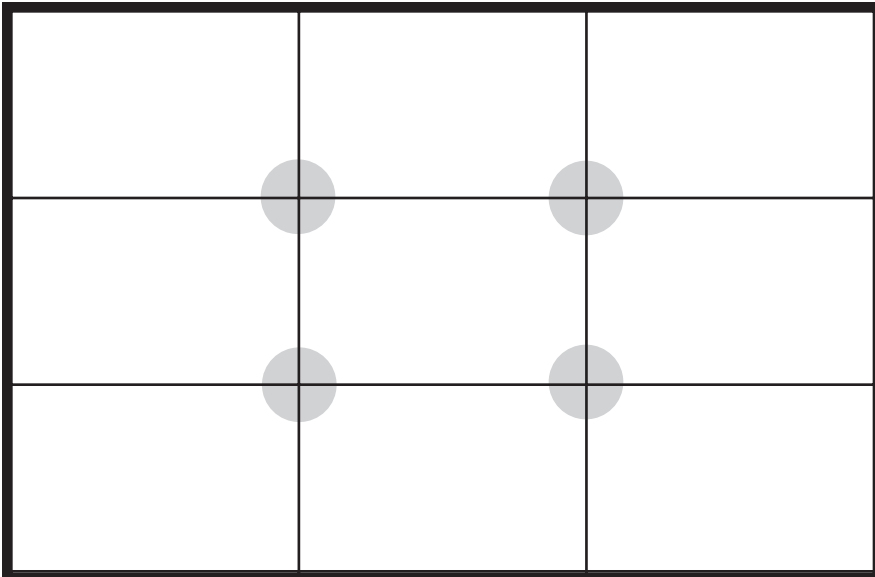
Move around

Don't be afraid to lie on the ground, climb (safely) or simply bend your knees to get a different perspective of a scene. A great deal of how successful a picture is comes from what angle it was shot at. If you look at the example to the left, you can see that I literally laid on the ground to take this picture of kids playing on the Merry-go-round. Not only is getting down low an easy way to eliminate unwanted background elements, but it will give people a perspective of everyday things in a way they don't normally see them.



Details

When looking at a subject, it's a good idea to take a few steps forward and look at it close, then take several steps back and look at it far away. You will be amazed at how different things look depending how close you are to them. I was photographing a field of sunflowers last summer and was shooting all these pictures of the whole field, then when I got closer, I saw this bumblebee collecting pollen and I would have missed it if I didn't get a closer look. It's important to assess the whole scene, then decide what you want to photograph.

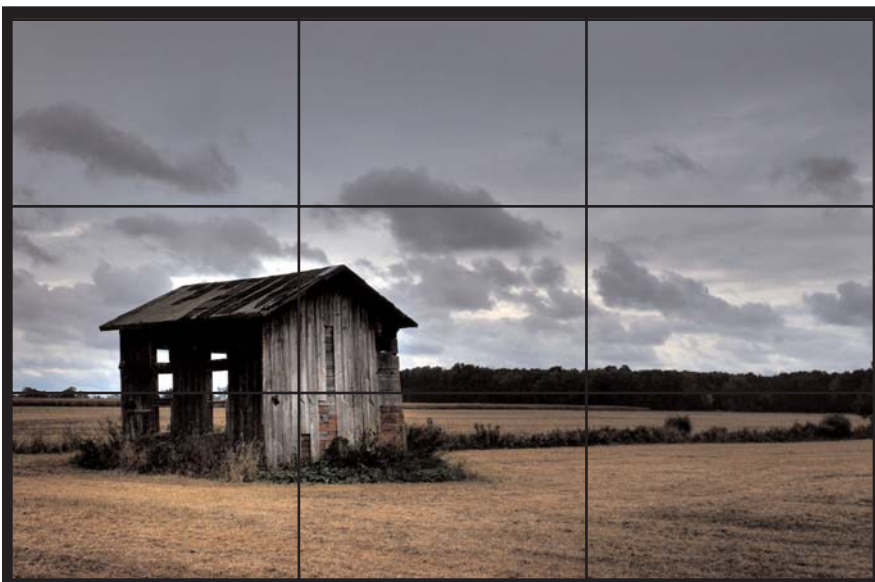


The Rule of Thirds

When you look through your camera imagine four lines, two horizontal and two vertical, spaced evenly across the viewfinder. This imaginary grid will divide the scene into nine equal squares. See the example to the left for help picturing this grid. As you can see the picture is divided into thirds on both the vertical and the horizontal. The area where these lines intersect, represented in the diagram with grey circles, is the ideal location for the focal point of a picture.



Look at the picture example to the left. Notice the simple composition and the placement of the focal point, the barn, and then look at the same example with the thirds grid on top. You will notice that the barn is positioned at the intersection of two of the lines. I wanted to emphasize the sky and the clouds so I placed the barn at the bottom of the composition. This picture would have looked different if I had placed the barn in the top 1/3 of the picture and had more foreground. Keep this in mind when you are composing your images and see how they turn out.



Vocabulary

COMPOSITION: The arrangement of elements in a picture or layout.

FOCAL POINT: The dominate element in a scene.

VIEWFINDER: The part of a camera you look through to see the picture you are about to take.

BACKGROUND: The area in a picture that is behind or on top of your subject or focal point. In the sample picture the background is the trees and the the sky.

FOREGROUND: The area, or elements in front of or below your subject or focal point. In the sample picture the foreground is the field.

you have to go back through and delete a bunch of images to make room on the spot.

2) Appropriately name folder images.

- You have instantly archived the photos if as soon as you download them, place them in a folder named what the assignment was. It will be easier to keep track of and easier to find in the future should you need to find file photos.

3) Edit images, then copy selections to an edit folder.

- It is much easier to deal with a smaller group of images when toning, so look at all the photos, then select a couple you like, then proceed to naming and color correction.

4) Rename the edited images in sequence ex. AC_football 1, AC_football 2, etc.

- This step can really be done at any time. I do it relatively early so I don't have to do it later. Also it helps sequence the photos, when working on a story that will have a picture package, as far as what will go dominant, secondary, etc.

5) Bring the images into Photoshop.

- Now comes the fun part. Remember Photoshop is a tool, and a versatile one at that. There is no one right way to do something. In most of the Adobe Creative Suite, there are more than one way to approach a task. Some are more complicated than others, but it all depends on what works for you.

6) Make color and tone corrections using curves.

- I use curves rather than levels, variations, auto color, etc., because it is the single most powerful editing tool in Photoshop.

- All the other correction tools — levels, variations, auto color, etc. — are running curves in the background, but giving you a different user interface, so you might as well cut out the middleman and go right to the source.

7) Size the image.

- This is a step that is often overlooked. There is no sense saving a picture 12 inches wide that is going to print at 4 inches. So make a copy of the image, size it, then save. You want to make a copy because you don't want to size down an original in case you need it larger for something else later on.

8) Unsharp mask.

- I sharpen the image after it is sized because I want it to be optimized at the size it will run.

9) Convert to CMYK.

- This is very important — you should not do any editing, toning or color correcting in CMYK. Leave it

Photography

Know your camera – read the manual and familiarize yourself with the features of your camera and what functions they perform.

Shoot, shoot, shoot and then shoot some more.

Lighting is key

- Know how to use the camera's white balance
- Invest in an external flash and a monopod

Common mistakes and misconceptions:

- “Oh no, this picture is out of focus” — Chances are it is not. It's blurry — there is a difference.
- The auto focus on the vast majority of cameras is very accurate and reliable, so more often than not blurry photos are caused by the operator.
- Your shutter speed needs to equal the focal length of the lens you are using, if you are going to hand hold the camera. For instance, if you are shooting sports and have a 200mm lens, you need to be shooting at a shutter speed of at least 1/200 sec; for a 50mm lens at least 1/50 sec, a 35mm at least 1/35 sec, etc.
- Hand shake, even if you think you have a steady hand, is responsible for half of all blurry pictures. Even the slightest vibration, like you breathing, can cause blur at slow shutter speeds.
- To remedy this I would strongly consider getting a monopod to steady the camera.
- The other half of blur comes from motion. The subject you are shooting is moving faster than the shutter speed.
 - Under normal shooting conditions (meaning non-sports like people walking, etc.) anything shot at a shutter speed slower than 1/50 of a sec. will start to have motion blur.
 - For sports the number is much higher; anything shoot under 1/200 sec. will begin to blur.
 - THE REMEDY: A flash will stop the action in the frame and eliminate most motion blur. So if you shoot in low light situations with a flash and monopod, nearly all blur should be eliminated from you pictures.
- Shooting night football is hard. It really isn't if you remember a few things:
 - You can't shoot the entire field from one spot and expect to get good pictures.
 - You are going to miss things — don't worry about if there is going to be another play right after that one.

for the final step before you save.

- CMYK and RGB are fundamentally different color environments.
- RGB is an additive color mode used by your monitor. You cannot accurately do color correction in CMYK mode, because it is not a language your monitor can accurately understand.
- CMYK is a subtractive color mode only used in the print process. It is important to convert your image mode once you are done, and if changes need to be made, back up and make the additional corrections in RGB.

10) Save to appropriate location.

- Pretty self-explanatory. Save the images in a location where it can easily be found.

- Stadium lights do not cover the field evenly, so avoid shooting outside the “hotspots.”
- My built-in camera flash is powerful enough to reach the players on the field. It really isn't — use an external flash.
- There has to be a ball in every shot. Work on defense shots, blocks tackles — those players work hard too.

Quick Tips:

- Learn how to calibrate you monitor:
 - Each workstation students work on should be consistent.
 - Calibrate once a month. Each computer is different, so you may have to do some research on how exactly to calibrate, but the end result should have you working in a 2.2 gamma.
- Develop a consistent workflow.
 - Developing an editing and toning standard with help consistency in the final product.
- Look at as many photographs as possible from many different sources. The more accustomed you become to “reading” photographs, the better you will become at shooting photographs.
- Look at outside development tools, such as books, online training, workshops and seminars.

PHOTOSHOP

- Photoshop is a tool, not a crutch.
- Start with a good exposure.
- Develop a consistent workflow.
- The steps you take in editing should be the same each time you edit.

My Approach to Imaging:

- 1) Download the memory media and format card.
 - I do this for two reasons:
 - If you download images after each assignment, it is easier to archive because you don't have to sort through a bunch of photos to group them later.
 - You don't want to be out shooting something and halfway through find that the card is full and