

Mile High Wildlife Photography Club

March 2007 Volume 31, Issue 3

DIGITAL SLR SENSOR CLEANING

Text and photos by Chris Loffredo

Anyone who shoots with a digital SLR will need to clean their sensor at some point. Unlike film, which advances after each frame, the digital camera sensor just sits there shot after shot. Eventually dust, dirt and grime will accumulate. Every time you open the body to change lenses, dust may enter the camera.

Unfortunately, the digital sensor seems to act as a magnet for dust. That's why it's best to always change lenses with the camera's power turned off. Try to do it out of the wind and with the opening pointing downwards and exposed for the shortest amount of time. Prevention is good, but at some point dust and dirt accumulation is unavoidable. Remember, too, there is often oil on the internal camera mechanics that may splatter.

According to your camera's owners manual, you are not supposed to clean the sensor yourself but rather send it in to the manufacturer for service. That is an option—probably a couple of hundred dollars and a few weeks down time, maybe as often as a couple of times a year for the heavy shooter. But, then what happens when your sensor gets dirty on that once in a lifetime African safari? Just think about cleaning a thousand dirty photos in Photoshop. Thus, folks have

been out there developing products and methods for do-it-yourself sensor cleaning. One of the best sources of information on the topic is a great website: www.cleaningdigitalcameras.com. This site has great descriptions and links to manufacturers. It also instructs you how to check your sensor for dust/dirt. I suggest you visit this site.



Clean sensors are critical for clean images.

I'll let you read about the various methods on your own, but let me give you some feedback on the methods that I have personally tried. First, we have dry vs. wet cleaning. A rubber blower is the first place I start. It's cheap, fast and manufacturer approved, but with limited results. I also have a pair of sensor brushes from www.visibledust.com. These are expensive, but they work very well. When it's more than just dust, I move to a wet method. The first that I tried is the spatula and Pecipad/Eclipse method. You can buy your own spatula and cut it down or buy one from www.copperhillimages.com. This is a cheap and effective way to go, but I admit it's a bit scary. Next, I tried the Visible Dust Swab (www.visibledust.com) and their Sensor Clean fluid. This is another excellent product from this company, but it's also very expensive. Lastly, my preferred method at

this time is the SensorKlear pen made by the company that makes the LensPen. This method gets endorsements from the likes of Arthur Morris (www.birdsasart.com) and Joseph Van Os Photo Safaris (www.photosafaris.com) both of whom also sell this product for around \$20. I find this method much easier than the liquid as you don't have to worry about leaving smears behind. Many camera service centers have been using LensPen products for years to clean sensors.



OK, now it's up to you. Yes, everyone will disclaim any and all responsibility if you damage your sensor by cleaning it with anything other than the blower brush. Thanks to the fear instilled by the camera manufacturers, the process of cleaning your DSLR sensor is intimidating at first. But once you've done it a couple of times, it becomes comfortable and pretty fast and easy. The good news is there are a number of alternatives ranging from mild to severe cleaning power. For most serious photographers, a combination of a couple of methods is a good addition to the camera bag.

At The Last Meeting...

Attendance at the February meeting was a bit sparse. No doubt the weather was a contributing factor, and the fact that Wednesday was also Valentine's Day probably added to the low turnout.

Dues Should Be Done

If you haven't paid your dues, they are now delinquent. In order to vote on club issues and compete in club competition, including the monthly competitions, your dues must be current. Contact Patrick Devereaux to update your membership.

TWE Exhibit

The Wildlife Experience returned the exhibit prints at the February meeting. Many people may have shied away from driving in the storm, so a lot of the prints did not go home with their photographers. The exhibit prints are stored in the locked storage room behind the stage. They will be available for pick-up at the March meeting.

Braggin' Rights

Irma Backelant won First place for nature photography and also a First Place for Art in Nature at the Focus Colorado Camera Club competition in February in her class 5.6 - beginners.

Ron Chapman had a shot of his best friend, Hershey, published in the *Broomfielder*.

Birds of a Feather...

Denver Field Ornithologists would like to invite all nature photographers to its meeting Monday April 23 at 7:30 in Ricketson Auditorium at Denver Museum of Nature & Science, 2001 Colorado Blvd, Denver. This meeting will feature a presentation *Hummers to Eagles: The Magical World of Birds* by renowned wildlife photographer Weldon Lee.

Park on the north side of the building and enter through the west door between 7 and 7:30pm. Free and open to the public.

Upcoming Programs

March— Wild Horses

Rita and Charlie Summers will present a program titled "All the Wild Horses". It will include information and history about all members of the horse family: Przewalski's horse, zebras, wild asses and a few groups of wild horses from around the country and world. The emphasis of the program will be the wild horses of the American West: where did they come from, where to find them, their behavior and future. Rita will also talk a bit about how they have gotten their horse photos published.

Of Interest

If you ever get locked out of the building during one of our meetings, go to the security office on the west side of the building at the loading dock.

February Competition Results

Judge: Craig Lewis

Category: Slides

Wildlife - 8 entries



1st Place
Up a Tree
Russ Burden

2nd Young Elephant
3rd Afternoon Rest

Rita Summers
Chris Loffredo

Scenic - 4 entries



1st Place
Sunset at Harris Beach
Russ Burden

2nd Schawbacher Dawn Nick Burden

HoM Wildlife - 2 entries



1st Place
Red Tail in Flight
Russ Burden

Category: Prints

Scenic - 7 entries



1st Place
Mittens Reflection
Reb Babcock

2nd UNO
3rd Driftwood

Irma Backelant
Dick York

Wildlife - 6 entries



1st Place
Sunset Fox
Reb Babcock

2nd Wood Duck in Still waters

Russ Burden

Hand of Man Wildlife - 1 entry

Image Not Available

1st Place
Golden Feathers/Golden Background
Nick Burden

One of My Favorite Places is...

somewhere in southern Utah.

Text and Photos by Jim Varner

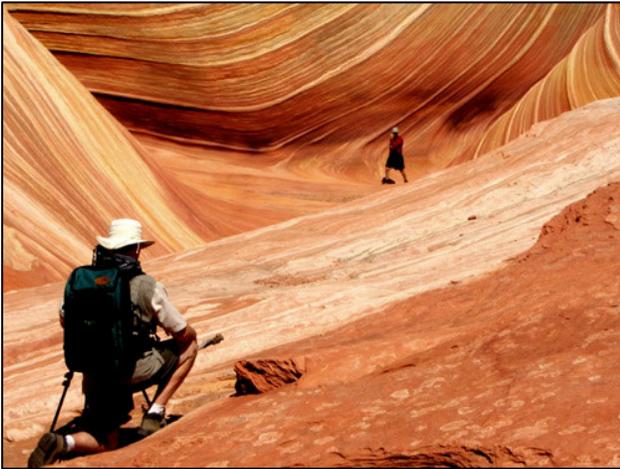
Defining a favorite place is really a difficult task! One easy answer is that my favorite place is where I'm currently shooting. As a landscape photographer, the adventure of researching a new shot and then getting to the location and actually crafting an image is hard to beat. Another candidate for favorite location might be the one that you discover fortuitously that yields a great image.

Ok, so you're looking for a more concrete answer to the favorite location question. Last May my wife, Laurie, and I planned a photography trip through southern Utah. One destination on the trip was "The Wave" in Coyote Buttes.



Coyote Buttes is a section of the Cockscomb geologic formation about 20 miles west of Page, Arizona. The Cockscomb parallels the Paria (*pah-RE-a*) River north into

Utah and the Grand Staircase- Escalante National Monument. Coyote Buttes features the famous “Wave” and the “Wave 2” for iconic destinations, but there are many other interesting subjects in the same general area. Since access to the area is restricted, you must apply for one of ten permits available online, or visit the Paria Ranger Station to receive one of 10 “walk up” hiking permits. Permits are distributed each morning, so if you arrive after 9 a.m. - as we did – and the quota for the day has been issued, you place your name on the list for the following day. So now we had most of the day to scout other locations.



In the ranger station parking lot, we met another photographer (from Utah) who had just finished several days of shooting without finding one particular destination – a cluster of tall hoodoos hidden in a remote alcove. To plan his next outing, the photographer had received directions to the site from a knowledgeable ranger. Camaraderie among photographers being what it is, Laurie and I soon had the directions to the remote location. Ok, so our plan became: locate the site, camp nearby, photograph the east facing formation at the break of dawn, and arrive back at the ranger station before 9 a.m. to receive our permit for Coyote Buttes.

This site was not easy to find and our 4-wheel drive pickup earned its keep on this adventure. The directions went something like this: head east on the main highway, turn north on a dirt road. In a couple miles, turn east on a smaller dirt road. Road --this looked like a wide cow path! In fact, the route passed through several barb wire cattle gates along the 9-mile

path with plenty of opportunities to take a wrong turn. Finally, descend a steep dugway into the quarter-mile-wide Waweep wash. Follow the dry, sandy, cobble stream bed south for about half a mile to reach a final fence/gate. After another half-mile of careful maneuvering among the random sand bars and river rock you will see an alcove containing a cluster of white 8-20 foot hoodoos on the west side of the valley.

After reaching the site, gusty winds kicked up the fine sand of the stream bed forcing us to eat inside the camper shell. Before dark, the wind settled so we could hike a few hundred yards to scout a good location for the sunrise shot. In the sandstone alcove, about 75 yards wide, the undulating, sloped terrain offered one small hill from which the best composition could be made. With our mission accomplished, we hiked back to the truck. That night while reading a hiking guide for the area, I discovered that we should have stopped at the last fence/gate. That was not part of our directions!! We had entered just inside a wilderness study area. Oops. In the dark, we were not about to negotiate the streambed again.



Eating breakfast bars as we hiked in predawn light towards the alcove, Laurie gets my attention – isn't that someone up ahead? In fact, it was another photographer with a tripod set up on “my” hill. After introductions, we learned that the photographer was a German tourist who had planned this shot from home. We're both impressed. Our foreign visitor caught the first light with his digital SLR and then offered the hill to us. I quickly set up the 4x5 and captured two images. It was not ideal light but the shot was still captivating. The main hoodoo is a striking, white 22-foot high Entrada sandstone pinnacle capped with a wider dark

conglomerate boulder, surrounded by several similar smaller hoodoos. All of the formations occupied a slope covered in sugar-like sand.

So... fortuitous directions, adventurous approach, unique subject, great image, better story. This is definitely one of my favorite locations.

The morning shoot got us back to the Paria Ranger station after 9 a.m. and all of the permits had been issued for the day. Luckily for us, someone had just canceled their Internet permit - so we inherited a permit originally issued to a hiker...from Liechtenstein.

From the Webmaster

The MHWPC website (www.mhwpc.org) has been updated to enhance its usefulness to the club with two major additions: newsletters and links.

Newsletters are now available online in PDF format going back to January 2006. Future newsletters may be distributed via the site instead of through email in order to save your valuable disk space. Of course, you'll be able to download the file to your own machine if you really want to have your very own personal copy. Online newsletters can be accessed through the Newsletter Archive page.

The other major addition is links to member's photo-related websites. The Links page provides a short description of the site and you'll be able to follow the link to see more of the work of some of our members. Contact the webmaster for information about adding a link to your site. The Links page will also have links to other photo clubs and businesses.

For those of you who haven't visited the site yet, the Competition Guidelines and Digital Image Submission Guidelines are online, as are the winning images for the 2006 TWE competition.

Coming soon:

- Winning images from the monthly competitions. They will probably be limited to the digital competitions unless digital files are available for the slide/print competitions. Anyone want to volunteer to take digital "snapshots" of slides/prints so all winning images can be included?

- Blog for current events like fall foliage and spring wildflower reports. Everyone will be able to view, but only members will be able to post.
- Broadcast messages where members will be able to email all other members.
- "For Sale" area where members will be able to post, you guessed it, items for sale.

Other ideas for the future:

- Online membership registration and renewal.
- Archive of favorite places to shoot.
- Other informational pages that are submitted (by-laws anyone?).
- An online photo critique area for members. A member will be able to upload an image, and others will be able to provide critiques. It will probably be in an area only for members, or at least only members will be able to enter critiques.

If you have any suggestions for how to improve the website, contact the [webmaster](#).

Club Field Trips

Listed below are tentative dates for club field trips.

- Ptarmigan, Guanella Pass—tentatively scheduled for late January or early February (March 3rd). This trip is questionable due to road conditions on Guanella Pass. Contact Chuck Winter, 303-972-2538 for details.
- Wild Horse Foals, Black Hills—May 5, 2007. The trip is full. Charlie will take a short list of folks who might want to go in the event of a cancellation but those who have booked seem certain to go. It is up to the individuals who are staying at Motel 8 to call and make their own reservations. The number is 1-800-800-8000. When calling, please be sure to state you are with the Mile High Wildlife Wild Horse Sanctuary Tour because then you will be put in a special block of rooms. Motel 8 is catering a continental breakfast for us so we can get to the Wild Horse Sanctuary just before sunrise on May

5th. Contact Charlie Summers, 303-840-3355 if you have questions.

Hospitality for February Meeting

Snacks: Bob Thompson & Randy Copsey

Drinks: Gary Lawrence

Library News from the Lamb's

Stop by the Library Table and learn something new or enjoy something old.

Sam Swears will be there to help you this month. Just fill out a card and check out something this month and be entered in the evening drawing!



Video Review

Creative Outdoor Photography
by Frans Lanting and Galen Rowell

This video gives the viewer an emotional view on the art of seeing into the photographs you may take. It gave me many new perspectives from which I might try new ideas. Check it out at the next meeting

See you next month
Joe and Betsy Lamb
jnblamb@comcast.net or 303-841-2565

For Sale

MHWPC - Camera club discount on photo gear
Hunt's Photo (est 1889), Melrose, MA
Contact: Gary Farber
1-800-221-1830 x2332
email: DigitalGuyGary@wbhunt.com
Please remember to tell Gary you are with MHWPC.

Also see sale flyers and the meeting or contact Chris Loffredo.

Equipment Wanted

Wanted to buy "used tripod- preferable Gitzo."
Call Irma Backelant 303-841-2294

Workshops and Seminars

Cathy & Gordon Illg – Workshops:
Adventure Photography 303 237-7086
gordon@advenphoto.com
www.advenphoto.com

- Southern Arizona, April 22–27
- Texas Birds, April 30 – May 5
- Louisiana/Texas Birds & Bayous, May 7–12
- Wild Horses, May 29 – June 2
- Mt. Evans/Alpine Adventure, June 12 –15
- Wildlife Babies, June 19 –22; only a few openings left
- Glacier National Park, July 8 – 13

Russ Burden's Photography Tours
Visit russburdenphotography.com. Contact
Russ at 303 791-9997, rburden@ecentral.com

Destinations include:

- Apr 21 - 27, 2007 - Monument Valley / Slot Canyons
- May 12 - 18, 2007 - Arches + Canyonlands National Park – includes 5 days of Photoshop instruction with a certified Photoshop Instructor.
- May 26 - June 4, 2007 - Oregon Coast and Northern California - 10 day trip
- June 16 - 22, 2007 - Tetons and Yellowstone Natl. Park in Spring
- Sept. 22-Oct. 1, 2007 - Tetons and Yellowstone Natl. Park in Fall -10 day trip
- Oct. 6 - 12, 2007 - Vermont in Autumn
- Oct. 20 - 25, 2007 - Hunts Mesa in Monument Valley and Capital Reef NP.
- Nov. 3 - 9, 2007 - Bryce Canyon and Zion National Park
- Dec. 1 - 7, 2007 - Bosque Del Apache and White Sands Natl. Mon.

James Hager Photography - Small Group Photo Safaris, www.JamesHagerPhoto.com
James@JamesHagerPhoto.com

- Kenya in Sept 2007: Classic safari to Samburu and Masai Mara National Reserves - 20 days, Sept 25 to Oct 14, 2007.

Mile High Wildlife Photography Club

President: Ron Eberhart
720-635-6337

Vice-President: Chris Loffredo
720-200-0792

Secretary/Treasurer: Patrick Devereaux
303-683-7011

TEAM LEADERS

Monthly Programs: *Chuck Winter 303-972-2538*

Membership: *vacant*

Special Programs/Field Trips:
Chuck Winter 303-972-2538

Competition: *Russ Burden*

Competition Scoring: *Chris Loffredo*

Competition Entrees: *Matt Schaefer/Fred Stearns*

Judging Coordinator: *Fred Stearns 303 400-0385*

Snacks/Greeters: *Roger Kinney 303-369-6120*

Publicity: *Buzz Soard 303-779-9933*

Library: *Betsy Lamb 303-841-2565*

Newsletter: *Frank Weston 303-829-7494*

Club Website: *James Hager*

<http://www.mhwpc.org>

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Russ Burden * Tom Lentz *

Rita Summers * Rick Harner * Chuck Winter *

March Meeting

Wednesday March 14
7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

at

THE WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE
10035 South Peoria

Competition: Digital
Submittal Deadline: March 10

February Attendance: 30
