



URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER PHOTO CLUB



July's "Clear Glass" Photo Challenge winner was Phyllis Bankier's "Celebration".

Join Us

We meet the first Thursday
of the month in the
Community Room of the
Urban Ecology Center
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM
1500 E. Park Place
Milwaukee, WI 53211
www.uecpc.org

Officers

Mary Dumont, President
Priscilla Farrell, Vice President
Tierra DiCarlo, Program
Sara Lasek, Treasurer
Audrey Waitkus, Secretary
Dan Ford, Exhibitions Chair
Dan Pugliese, Technical Chair
Steve Jarvis, Night Riders Chair
Phyllis Bankier, Website
Phil Waitkus, Newsletter



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DATES TO REMEMBER

August 26, The Club's Night Riders meet at Cafe Hollander 6:00PM for a night shoot.

September 2, UECPC meeting night.

October 3-9. PSA Conference in Charleston, SC. See PSA web site for further information. <http://www.psa-photo.org/conferences.asp?menuID=8&DivID=8>

URBAN ECOLOGY PHOTO CLUB AFFILIATIONS



UECPC AUGUST CHALLENGE - "CLEAR GLASS"



Second Place
Ryan Kane's
"Clear Glass Beach"

Third Place
Susan Allen's
"Glass 2"



UECPC AUGUST CHALLENGE - "CLEAR GLASS" CONTINUED



Steve Jarvis, "Clear Glass"



George Gilman, Wine Glass



Dan Pugliese, Through the window

UEPC AUGUST CHALLENGE - "CLEAR GLASS" CONTINUED



Carole Kincaid,
"Clear Glass"



Dave Woodward
"MTI"



Audrey Waitkus
"Pour Me a Glass"

UECPC AUGUST CHALLENGE - "CLEAR GLASS" CONTINUED



Betsy Bie
Glass Challenge

Phil Waitkus
"Eye Sea You" (Cana Island light
fresnel lens)



MEMBER EXHIBITS

All,
I spoke with the Activities Director, Ms. Jan Blackburn, at the Village at Manor Park, today, regarding the exhibit we are invited to display. The dates will be 11/07/10 thru 12/17/10. There will be an Opening Reception, classy I might add, on Wednesday, 11/10/10, 3:00p to 6:00p. There will be a closing reception on 12/17 10, 3:00p to 6:00p.

I will need volunteers to assist in hanging on Sunday, 11/07/10, 3 to 4 people, and again on Friday, 12/17/10. Details to be announced later.

There will NOT be a co-operative meeting of the UECPC and the VMP Shutterbugs. Instead, the VMP Shutterbugs will be our 'Special Guests' at the Opening Reception.

Any discussion? Major details will NOT be changed as VMP the Newsletter for the 4th Quarter is about to be published.

Dan Ford
Exhibit Chairperson

"Mary Dumont has her images on the UECPC Exhibit wall for the months of July and August. Next, is a collaboration of Sara Lasek and Priscilla Farrell for the months of September and October." Be sure to stop at the exhibit wall and have a look. The UEC has some requirements for exhibiting there, and these photographs demonstrate the requirements that the image have a nature topic or are aligned with the objectives of the Urban Ecology Center.

Ted will have an exhibit at Bella Salon in Shorewood for the next month.

If anyone is showing work locally, nationally or internationally please let me know and I can put it in the newsletter so others won't miss it. PW

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS

September's Featured Photographers
Raven Hamilton, Carl Wagner and Steve Jarvis

SEPTEMBER FOOD AND BEVERAGE RESPONSIBILITIES

FOOD

**Steve Jarvis and
Carl Wagner**

BEVERAGES

**Nate Kirschner and
Raven Hamilton**

THE THREE MINUTE PROFESSOR

Because of the club election, Portfolio Review, Featured Photographers and Challenge we skipped the 3 minute professor this month. Surprises and changes in this program await us.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

September's Photo Challenge

“Framing” -- Show how you use framing to make a strong and original photograph. The club has had a mini-discussion about this in response to one of Priscilla's photos where she utilized framing and several other subtle elements of composition to create a memorable shot of the Mitchell Park Domes.

URLs OF INTEREST

Dan Ford sent in this URL to a free trial version of Light Room 3

https://www.adobe.com/cfusion/tdrc/index.cfm?product=photoshop_lightroom

Photomatix link

<http://www.hdrsoft.com/download.html>

Photomatix tutorial

http://www.hdrsoft.com/resources/tutorial_basic/index.html

Other HDR Tutorials

<http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/high-dynamic-range.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_dynamic_range_imaging

Ryan's link to a good tutorial

<http://www.stuckincustoms.com/>

Bad HDR examples

<http://forums.dpreview.com/forums/read.asp?forum=1010&message=35057749>

<http://layersmagazine.com/why-does-hdr-bring-out-the-bestworst-in-you-as-a-photographer.html>

<http://www.devalcourt.com/2010/07/first-attempt-hdr-photography-with-iphone-4/>

Vastly divergent opinions of the HDR effect

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/central/discuss/72157594266870418/>

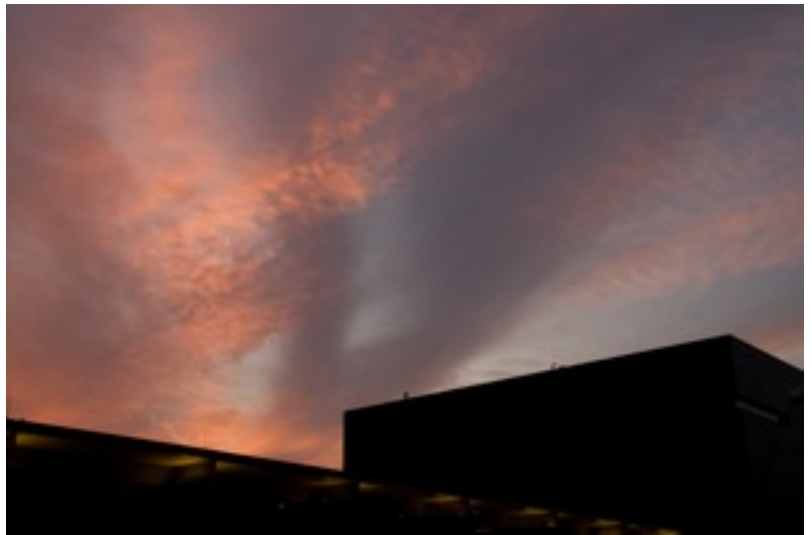
THE NIGHT RIDERS SHOTS FROM THE JULY OUTING

Come Join us at the Cafe Hollander on the 4th Thursday of each month, 6:00PM for a snack/supper or just a beer. It'll be an interesting evening of dusk or night shooting opportunities in Milwaukee. I'll try to put two-three of your images in the newsletter if you send them to me afterwards.



All shots above by Steve Jarvis

THE NIGHT RIDERS SHOTS FROM THE JULY OUTING-CONT'D



All shots above by
Susan Allen

THE UECPC DIGITAL DIALOG

The club has shown a lot of interest in HDR processing. Pugs wrote in, after he reviewed last months DD article, that perhaps we should consider showing everyone what not to do, as it's valuable to know when you've gone too far. With this thought in mind we elected to do a continuation of our HDR discussion from last month. As Ryan has been experimenting, and reading a lot about the technique for longer than most of us, I asked him if he would write the article. He graciously accepted. I think you will find it informative and fun to read as well. PAW

How absolutely, positively NOT to do HDR (read: HDR Fail.)

By Ryan Kane

I in no way claim to be an HDR expert. Heck, I in no way claim to be a photography expert. Let's go one further, I in no way claim to be an artistic expert. Ok, even more, I am hardly artistic... at all. I am an engineer, not an artist. I struggle through the artistic/compositional element of photography all the time. However, that said, I do know what looks good when I see it. And I've seen a lot of BAD HDR. Especially some of my older and earlier attempts at it.

My HDR has gotten better (I hope!) through practice and lots of time spent putzing around with all the settings available in Photomatix in order to get what I want (or as close to it as is possible). Here's what I've learned and I hope that it helps you, should you decide to jump into the piranha infested swimming pool of HDR.

If you recall from Phil's article on HDR, it is all about the Dynamic Range of an image. Put simply, the amount of variation in light. What it will do in the simplest terms is, using 3 different exposures of the same subject, use the highlights from the under-exposed image (too dark an image, but you will still see the highlights from those areas that are much more bright). It will use the shadows from the over-exposed image (the image is very bright, but those shadowy areas are still darker than the rest). And finally it will place those together with the properly exposed image to create your final product.

So, that said, let's talk a bit about what I've found makes for a bad source image(s) to use. The simplest thing to remember about what makes for a bad (or at the very least a dull) HDR image is a subject which has a smooth and non-contrasting texture. Just because you have a terrific photograph that you took of a great subject don't think it will automatically mean that an HDR image of it will be equally nice to look at. That takes nothing away from the photo, it just means that it might not be right for HDR, which is perfectly fine. HDR is just another tool in the toolbox. You wouldn't take out a hammer to screw in a screw, so you don't need to use HDR for every image, because sometimes it's just not the right tool to use.

A solid blue box against a darker blue background might make for an interesting image photographically (then again, maybe not), but might make for a lousy HDR image. In some cases, you can barely even tell the difference between your HDR processed image and your original because there's not enough contrast or variation there for the processor to use to make it interesting. Typically, these come from images with solid colors or very small amounts of color variation because

there's not enough shadow or highlight in order to distinguish between the HDR image and the original.

When I say shadow or highlight, I don't necessarily mean the shadow of a person or the highlight of light on them, it can be on a very small scale. The barely noticeable shadows and highlights in the small fissures and bumps of a rock can make the texture in HDR really stand out from the original source.

As you can see, the rock looks incredibly textured. When I was standing on the beach (Crooked Island, Alaska, if you're wondering) that rock looked solid, grey and boring. When I processed it in HDR, it really popped. I'd love to put the original side by side with the HDR, but alas, my backup hard drive crashed a few months back and I lost 2 years worth of originals, so in this case all I have is the final product. At any rate, what I'm getting at is that lack of texture and lack of contrast generally make for a boring HDR image. But sometimes you just need to process it to find that out.



Another image to avoid trying to turn into HDR is a subject that is bright white. Unfortunately, because of the under-exposed source image turning the whites of your subject into a dark white (the highly technical term for this is "grey"), in your final image the whites will simply end up completely wrong. Here's an example of an early HDR attempt on my part that will make this point better.

As you can see, Prince's jersey is a dull grey. I assure you, I was not visiting the Brewers at an out-of-town game, where they do where grey jerseys. This was a bright, sunny day at Miller Park and The Big Man's jersey was solid white. But, not in HDR. Boy, looking back on this image just makes me cringe. But, in my defense, it was my first try at HDR (that wasn't just playing around). And would you believe it, that was only a year ago.

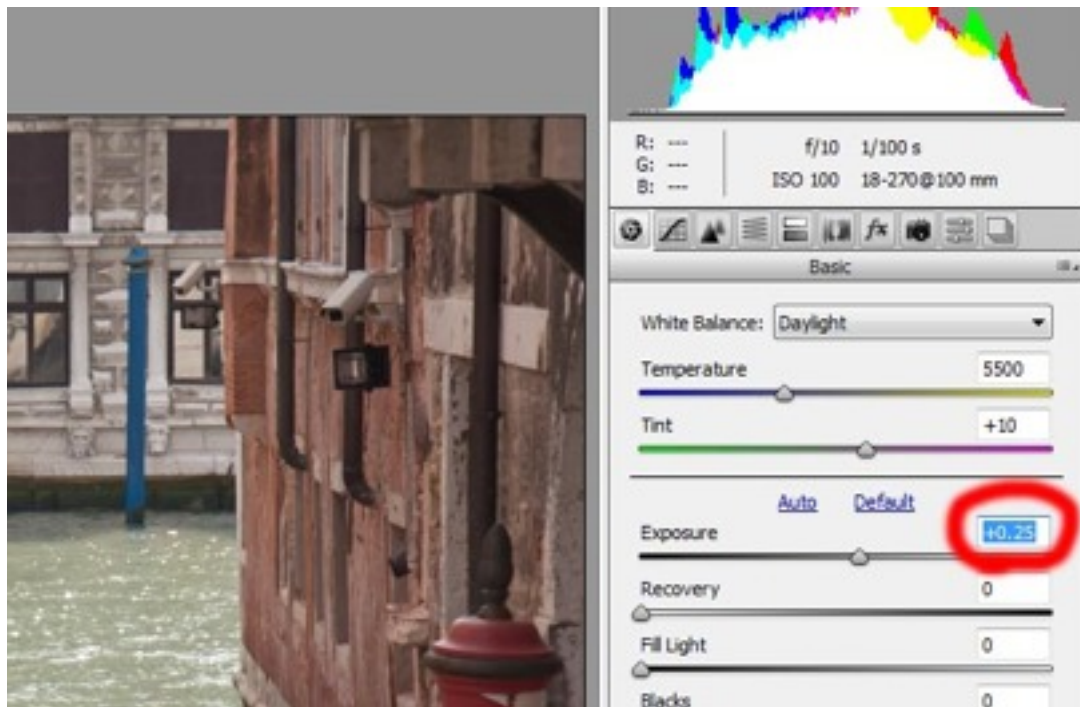


Another thing this image highlights is the third thing which you should look out for when attempting HDR. Either a bright subject on a dark background or vice versa. Though it's more subtle in this example, it can still be seen. The infamous HDR halo. If you look closely at Fielder's helmet, and more specifically the halo around it which can be seen by looking at the chalk lines and grass behind it. I'm sure Prince is no angel (he's just greedy... turning down \$105 million over 5 years because it wasn't enough. HMPH!), I just failed at making a good HDR image. Also, look at his shadow on the dirt, notice how the very bottom edge of the shadow has a small halo that makes the dirt just below it look more bright than the rest of the dirt? That's my failure as well. Sometimes a small amount of halo isn't a big deal and not very noticeable. Sometimes it's horrific.

So, now that we know what source images to use for HDR, let's discuss the actual making of an HDR image and how to do that poorly. Most of the time, when I am making an HDR image, I'm using a single RAW exposure. That's because most of the time, HDR is an after thought and I wasn't thinking about taking multiple exposures of a subject. What that also means is that I don't usually have a tripod with me, and so I can't get 3 of the exact same image exposed differently.

What you do is open up your image in your RAW processor (or a Tiff or Jpeg in your image editor when it has a brightness or exposure adjustment setting) and create 3 different exposures from it. A good rule of thumb to use is to not go up or down too far in exposure to create the source images, staying at about 1.50 stops up or down from your original image.

This image is from the Photoshop RAW processor. You can slide your exposure up or down. What I typically do is get my original image the way I want it in raw, then save it as a .TIFF. Then I set my exposure up and down (about 1.5 stops from wherever I ended up with the original) and save each of those as .TIFFs as well (not changing anything else other than exposure). You really don't want to go too far because you'll lose lots of detail, but for my



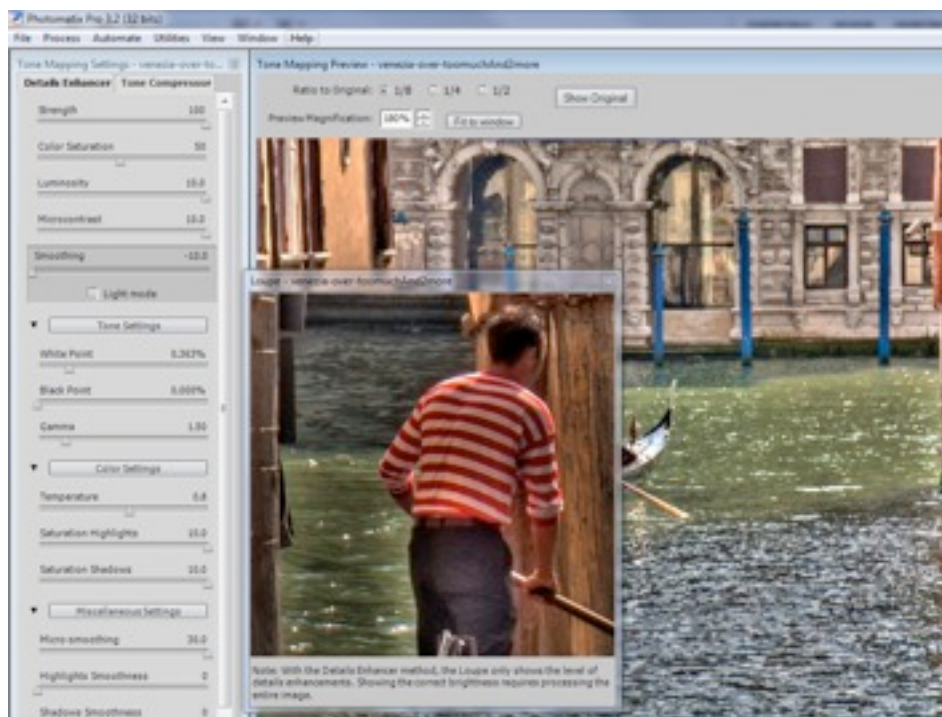
example I set my stops at 2.50, just to show you what NOT to do. I think, if I recall correctly, that shot of Prince Fielder was set at +/- 3.00 stops. Pretty ridiculous on my part.

When you open Photomatix (or whatever your HDR program of choice is) you'll load your 3 (or 5 or 7 or, if you're really an elitist about it, 9) images and let it do it's thing. Phil explained most of this

process already, so I'll skip to the part where we change our settings, and show you how to do it poorly.

Photomatix has a number of sliders for Tone Mapping. Tone Mapping is the thing that you actually use to make the HDR look like an HDR image. Obviously, it, um, maps tones. I don't know what that means. Except in very select cases, you never want to move those sliders all the way in either direction. When you do, this is what you get.

Notice on the left side, many of those sliders (smoothing, strength, microcontrast, micro-smoothing, etc.) are all moved over to the extremes. It shows a better example of the halo I talked about earlier. His pants should not be glowing. Not unless they're magical, and even then that's just creepy. And they've turned from black to noisy-grey, because of the TOO over-exposed image. Look at the white stripes on his shirt. Notice how dark they've become because of the too under-exposed source image and the tone mapping going too far. It's just bad! Being in the middle is good.



Remember the 3 things about bad HDR. No Halos, unless you've actually managed to take a picture of an angel... which may be difficult. No grey-whites from too much white in the original (and/or too dark an under-exposure). No contrast/texture in the source which makes the HDR pointless.

So, if you DO want to attempt HDR, play around with it (it's fun!), but don't think you need to go too far. The best HDR images that I've seen out there are the ones that bring out the detail, while leaving the rest of the original image intact. In my opinion, the best HDR images end up looking a bit surreal. But best part of the word surreal is "real", not like a cartoon. Do a google search sometime for the term "Bad HDR", there are plenty of examples of what to avoid. Images that look flat because the tone mapping was so strong that it eliminated all the contrast. The rampant haloing (is that even a word?). The grey, dull and listless images are all out there. Don't add yours to the list!

For a terrific online tutorial or just tips and tricks, check out www.stuckincustoms.com. Trey Ratcliff has turned into an expert on the subject by blogging about it and posting his HDR images daily. His images are (mostly) a truly stunning example of what can be achieved when HDR is done right.

Editor's Note: Next month, watch for a continuation of the HDR topic with an investigation of creating HDR images without using any of the modern HDR tools.