



October Meeting:

Bill Lea to Present Wildlife Photography Program

On October 25, Bill Lea will present a program on wildlife photography. Bill is probably best known for his photographic work on wildlife in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, which is the subject of a new book published in the spring of 2005.

Bill Lea has photographed wildlife, wildflowers, landscapes and a variety of other subjects from the Canadian Rockies to the Florida Everglades. Thousands of Bill's photographs have been published in an array of books, calendars, magazines, posters, advertisements, and greeting cards. Some credits include *American Forests*, Audubon calendars, *Blue Ridge Country*, *Colorado Outdoors*, *Country America*, *Defenders (of Wildlife)*, *Field & Stream*, *National Geographic* books, *National Wildlife* books, *The Nature Conservancy* magazine, *Outdoor Life*, *Outdoor Canada*, *Outdoor Oklahoma*, *Sports Afield*, *Virginia Wildlife*, *Wildlife in North Carolina* and many others.

Bill was the first photographer to have three front covers published in a row in the over 100-year history of *Field & Stream* magazine. A photo workshop instructor for more than 15 years, Bill has long worked actively with the American Bear Association, a Minnesota-based non-profit organization dedicated to "promoting the welfare of the black bear."

Bill is one of the truly outstanding nature photographers in the country. He believes that learning to recognize quality of light is the secret to creating beautiful photographic images. From one of his articles in *Smoky Mountain Living* magazine, "... outdoor photographers spend most of their time trying to capture the essence of something that rockets along at about 186,000 miles per second. As a nature photographer, it seems I am always chasing the ever-elusive perfect light!"

Come to the October meeting and see how Bill puts this philosophy into practice in his wildlife photography.

Copies of his new book will be available at the meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

- **November:** Jerry Greer
- **December:** No meeting
- **January:** Larry Perry
- **February:** Annual Competition Dinner

Member News

- SANP member Art Costello had a photograph accepted by The Knoxville Museum of Art for their artscapes auction on Oct. 6-7, 2005. His photo was one of about 14 being displayed on KMA's web site.
- Martha and Joe Stewart won several awards recently in the Anderson County Fair Photography Competition. Joe won three first places and two second places, while Martha won three first places, three second places, and one honorable mention. Martha also won Best of Show.
- In the Downtown Kingsport Association Photo Contest, Dick Ramsey won second place; Sue Ramsey won 3rd place and honorable mention and Janice Duncan got an honorable mention.

Don't be shy! Notify the newsletter editor, Ron McConathy (mccconathy@aronsha.com), if you have a service to offer members, have been honored, or have achieved something noteworthy. This is your newsletter—let others know what you are doing in photography.

Photoshop Elements 4.0

Adobe Systems has announced Photoshop Elements 4.0. The lite version of Adobe's professional image editing program Photoshop, Elements offers a new automatic red-eye removal function, which detects face shapes in images and removes red-eye as photos are downloaded from the camera. It also features a new Magic Selection brush for adjustments to specific parts of an image as well as Magic Extractor and new Skin Tone Adjustment. Adobe has developed the tagging feature found in Elements 3.0 with the new Face Tagging, which automatically detects faces in a photo so they can be easily tagged and quickly found later. Photoshop Elements 4.0 is currently only available for Windows, priced ~\$125. A spokesman for Adobe said that the program will be supported on the Mac in the near future. (More info at <http://www.dpreview.com>.)

SANP Officers and Committee Chairs

President	Lee Ownby	865.690.8460
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Elected Board Members:

Bill Carter	Harold Howell
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Gloria Epperson	Alice Reed
Mark Frankel	Margarete Ohnesorge
Shawn Grant	Mike Williams

The SANP Board meets monthly. If you have issues you would like the board to discuss, contact Lee Ownby, leeownby@mindspring.com.

SANP News is published monthly except June and July to provide information to members. Articles or ideas from the membership are welcome.

Newsletter Deadline: First of each month

Send submissions to mconathy@aronsha.com

SANP mailing address:

P.O. Box 32324, Knoxville, TN 37930-2324

Equipment For Sale

If you have unused photo equipment taking up space at your house, use this newsletter to help it find a new home. Email the editor (mconathy@aronsha.com) with the details.

Photo Tip: On Charging Batteries

—Bob and Gloria Epperson

In the discussion period at last month's meeting, we should have commented on what we do to keep our (equipment) batteries charged while on the road. Several years ago we purchased a portable power inverter, 12 VDC to 115 VAC, catalogue #22-132B, from Radio Shack, which has served our purpose very well over the years. The output is 115V / 140W continuous. No doubt the catalogue number may have changed, but the product should still be available.

Just remember: When you use an inverter in your vehicle, be sure the power connection to the inverter (typically a cigarette lighter plug) is not turned OFF when the ignition is turned OFF. Otherwise, no battery charging takes place when the vehicle isn't running.)

*President's Corner***A Picture on the Office Wall ...**

—Lee Ownby

A picture of Mesa Arch hanging in my office is a technical failure. The overhead sun has bleached the normally red rock into various shades of white. Distant rock spirals and canyons seem lost in the haze generated by the noontday heat. Despite the photographic deficiencies, the picture is important to me. My wife and children are seated on a ledge gazing into the abyss that starts just beyond the arch. The photograph is almost ten years old. It represents the only time that we as a family shared that view together.

Nature photography has acted as a catalyst; it has become a primary force in the selection and implementation of our travel dreams. Since that time, we have journeyed to many national parks at home and abroad in search of the "perfect photo," or more appropriately, just for the joy of experiencing the discovery process.

Family and friends often provide the foundation that supports the creation of beautiful photographs. Is it enough to photograph alone with neither positive nor negative feedback about your picture taking? Certainly, there are times when a solitary excursion makes more sense, and may be necessary to capture the essence of your photographic vision. But family, club members, or other companions are essential in order to make the journey worthwhile. I have not heard of a single photographer, who after making a specific photographic trip, returned home, viewed his or her pictures, thought "I got it," and then pitched them in the trash.

It has become a tradition with my sons, and I hope to continue with my daughter, to travel during their fall school break to an interesting destination wherever frequent flyer or sky miles will take us. This year my son Craig and I will journey to the volcanic island of Montserrat to explore and photograph before the tourist crowd returns. The new airport opened in July and the hotel has cleared the lava off the grounds and out of the swimming pool. So this family commitment will prevent my being present at the October meeting. The chronicles of this journey will be disclosed in a subsequent newsletter.

Photos that include family or friends mark a certain place in time, and any review often stimulates fond memories of those special moments together. Almost sounds like an old film commercial, doesn't it? Reality may be a shade less than corny, but for me, the pictures on the office wall are there for a reason. They are a reminder of why I show up to do the job that I do. See you in November.

New Sigma Lens

Sigma Corporation has announced its new 28-105 F2.8-4 DG lens. This large aperture standard zoom lens provides superior performance both for Digital SLR Cameras and 35mm Film SLR Cameras. The lens covers frequently used focal lengths from 28mm to 105mm and allows a large aperture of F2.8 at the 28mm focal length. The new multilayer lens coating and lens design reduce flare and ghost, a common problem with digital cameras, and also create an optimum color balance throughout the entire zoom range. This lens has minimum focusing distance of 50cm (19.7 in.), and it has also maximum magnification of 1:5.5. Because the front of the lens does not rotate, circular polarizing filters and a petal-type hood can easily be used. It will be priced ~\$335. (More info at www.dpreview.com.)

Digital Nitty Gritty: Camera Dust Cleaning

— Larry Perry

If you have a point-and-shoot camera, you don't have to worry about sensor dust, because your camera is completely sealed. But if you use a digital SLR, you might one day find your images exhibiting annoying smears and spots. Because the lenses on most SLRs are removable, dust and who knows what else can work its way inside your camera and stick to the sensor. Even if you never remove the lens, it's still theoretically possible for dust to get on your sensor, particularly if you shoot in dry, dusty environments.

If you are worried about dust while in the field, try shooting at wider apertures to reduce sensor dust visibility. However, no matter how careful you are, one day you might download pictures from your camera and find spots and smudges. If the spots aren't bad, you can try to remove them with an image editor's rubber stamp or clone tool. If you shoot lots of images, though, or if the dust problem is severe, a manual fix isn't practical. You need to clean your camera's sensor.

Not for the Faint of Warranty

Your camera's sensor sits directly behind the lens, inside a chamber that houses a mirror. When you press the shutter, this mirror flips up to reveal the shutter. The shutter then opens to expose the sensor.

The image sensor chip is not directly exposed (pun intended) but sits behind a protective covering. The distance between the covering and the chip often has a lot to do with how visible dust can be. When the sensor and cover are very close together, dust will be more visible than when the protective cover is far away from the sensor.

The good news is that you're not actually cleaning the sensor, but its protective covering. The bad news is that scratching or damaging this covering still messes up your camera.

For this reason, many manufacturers cite cleaning your camera as a violation of your warranty. If you don't want to lose your warranty's protection, are extremely uncoordinated, or generally have perpetual bad luck, cleaning your sensor yourself may not be the best idea.

But if you're up for the challenge, you'll be relieved to hear that sensor cleaning is relatively easy. You have to work pretty hard to damage your camera, so there's really no reason to be afraid of trying it.

Is it Really Dirty?

Some smudges and blobs might be debris on your camera lens (or on your computer screen; I've spent an embarrassing amount of time trying to clone away spots that turned out to be dirt on my monitor). Though you can clean your lenses to see if this takes care of the problem, the best way to determine if your camera sensor needs a cleaning is to shoot a picture of its dust, if there is any.

First, select a lens with a short to normal focal length (20-50mm). Clean the lens and then put it on your camera. Switch to aperture priority mode and choose a very small aperture, such as *f*/22. Set your lens to manual focus and point the camera at a featureless blue sky, or at a bare white wall. You don't want to confuse any image detail for sensor dust, so try to get the lens as out of focus as possible. You can even set to a slow shutter speed and move the camera around a bit while shooting to further blur any detail. If you're shooting the sky, shoot as straight up as possible, to avoid the brightening of the sky that appears toward the horizon. Obviously, point as far away from the sun as you can. Shoot a couple of frames and then import them into your computer.

Shooting at a color field with an extremely small aperture makes it easy to see any sensor dust problems your camera might have.

There's dust, and then there's dust. Shooting soft focus with an extremely narrow aperture at a bare field of color is going to reveal even tiny dust issues that will probably be invisible in most shooting situations. Once you've shot this "dust map," look at your other recent images to see whether any of the dust that you can see in your test image is visible in other images. If it's not, you might not want to risk cleaning your sensor. If it is, or if your dust problems include black spots and heavy smudges, you'll want to clean.

If your camera is new but has dust problems, some may come from the camera itself. As you use it, particles can slough off of different

components inside the mirror chamber. Over time, this particle shedding will wane, but in the meantime you might still need to clean.

First, the Air

Some people use air blowers from a camera store -- or embarrassing items from a drug store -- to clean the inside of the camera. I don't recommend that approach, but here is a description anyway for you die hards. You should never use canned compressed air for cleaning the inside of your digital camera.

For sensor cleaning, continue to stay far away from compressed air. Find a non-drafty, well-lit, clean location and get your blower or blower brush. Next, remove the camera's lens, and you'll see the mirror that sits between you and the cleaning you want to do. Blow out the sensor chamber so there aren't any particles to fall on the sensor. You're now ready to start the cleaning in earnest.

Most SLRs have a special cleaning mode that flips up the mirror, opens the shutter, and leaves them both that way until the camera is powered down. With the shutter and mirror out of the way, you'll be able to get to the sensor. Or you can put the camera in the Manual Mode and set the Shutter speed to 'B'.

This is the potentially risky part. If the camera loses power, the shutter will close and the mirror will come down. If you've got the tip of a blower brush in the way of the shutter or mirror when either tries to close, you could seriously damage the mechanics of your camera. Consequently, you want to ensure that you have a completely charged battery installed before you start cleaning. If you have an AC adapter for your camera, that's even better. Some cameras, such as some Nikon SLRs, don't let you activate cleaning mode unless they're powered by AC.

Cleaning mode is usually activated using a function on the camera's main menu system. In some cases it may be a custom function or buried deep in a sub-menu to prevent accidental activation. Before starting to clean, read your camera's manual for full instructions on how to use the cleaning mode.

When blowing out the sensor chamber, hold the camera down so that any dust you dislodge will fall out of the camera. Once you've activated cleaning mode, place the tip of your blower just inside the camera. Don't place it right on top of the sensor, as doing so will increase the chances that you'll bump the protective glass plate -- a very bad scenario. And you definitely don't want to brush the sensor with a blower brush. As long as the blower is big enough, inserting it just past the camera mount should give you enough cleaning power.

Give a few vigorous blowings, then cancel cleaning mode. Now, remount your lens and perform your dust test again. Did you eliminate the problem? If not, you'll have to take more drastic measures.

Visible Dust---RECOMMENDED WAY

When air cleaning isn't enough, you need special cleaning tools. A combination of special brushes and cleaning solutions, these cleaning techniques involve brushing or swabbing the actual sensor covering. This involves manipulating the most sensitive part of your camera's imaging mechanism, so it's a good time to reassess whether you want to send your camera to the manufacturer for cleaning.

DO NOT use your own brushes or cleaning solutions for cleaning your sensor! Cleaning your sensor requires brush hygiene of a completely different order of magnitude. Unfortunately, it's an order of magnitude that will cost you some money.

Visible Dust, Inc., has a long history of developing products for cleaning high-end optical devices such as microscopes. They now offer product kits for cleaning digital image sensors. These kits range from special brushes to cleaning solutions and swabs to combinations of both. I recommend them. In addition to selling cleaning kits, Visible Dust also provides detailed cleaning instructions.

Ashes to Ashes!

Depending on your shooting habits and proclivities, you may never have a dust problem, or you may encounter it only once every few years. The first cleaning will be the hardest, simply because it can be a little scary to muck with the guts of your camera. However, it is possible to effectively clean your own camera sensor without damaging your gear.

Southern Appalachian Nature Photographers

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Southern Appalachian Nature Photographers is a nonprofit organization dedicated to "Sharing the Awareness of Nature through Photography." The club meets the last Tuesday of every month except June, July, and December at the First United Methodist Church on Kingston Pike in Knoxville at 6:30 p.m. for social time and 7 for the program. Visitors are welcome!