

GAMMAGRAM



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What did you do this Summer?



Chuck Pivetti took pictures of flowers from his yard and turned them into ART!



Dolores Frank made some new friends in Iceland.

Read About and See More Adventures
Lynne and Greg Anzelc Hike Yosemite pages 2 & 3
Bob Hubbell does Panoramas.....pages 4 & 5
Sande Parker does some High Flying page 6

So its time to get those images from your summer into competition.

See page 7

Two upcoming conferences
Fotoclave in Octoberpage 8
PSA (Yellowstone).....
Information in last Gammagram

Editor's Mistake!
Last month, the rose with Bob's article was taken by Donna Sturla



The Panoramic Trail in Yosemite National Park

by Lynne and Greg Anzelc

Few trails in the country offer more diverse, spectacular scenery and a tougher lower body workout than Yosemite's Panorama Trail. With nearly 9 miles of granite steps, switchbacks, and dusty pathways, Panorama earns its name by giving hikers unprecedented views of Yosemite's most famous features: Illilouette Creek, Gorge and Falls, Nevada Falls, Vernal Falls, Emerald Pool, Sierra Point, Grizzly Peak, the Merced River, Liberty Cap, Half Dome, Mount Broderick, Glacier Point, and Yosemite Valley.

Starting at Glacier Point, we followed the Panorama Trail on a switchback slightly downward on a dusty path through the Manzanita and Ceanothus brush, taking notice of a few bear clawed trees. We stopped to take in the Panoramic view of Half Dome from an angle we had never seen before.



Half Dome from Liberty Cap

Our descent took us a mile and a half into the Illilouette Gorge, where we could hear the babble of Illilouette Creek, and the thunder of Illilouette Falls. From the Trail, we could only capture the top as it spilled over the cliffs.



Illilouette Falls

From the Illouette footbridge, the trail climbs steeply up along the ridge (700 ft in a mile and a half) until it reaches the top of the Panorama Cliffs.



Illouette Bridge

Along this trail we stopped for spectacular views of Yosemite Valley and Half Dome, Liberty Cap and Nevada Falls (584 ft). At this point, the Panorama Trail moves inland and switchbacks along mossy rocks and trees.



Mossy Path

Then down to the top of Nevada Falls where we took a breather to enjoy the rush of water, and the cool air



Nevada Falls

The trail continues down the switchbacks, but of course we chose to take the steep trail down the face of Nevada Falls, climbing down what I deemed as barely a path! The John Muir Trail is another option!



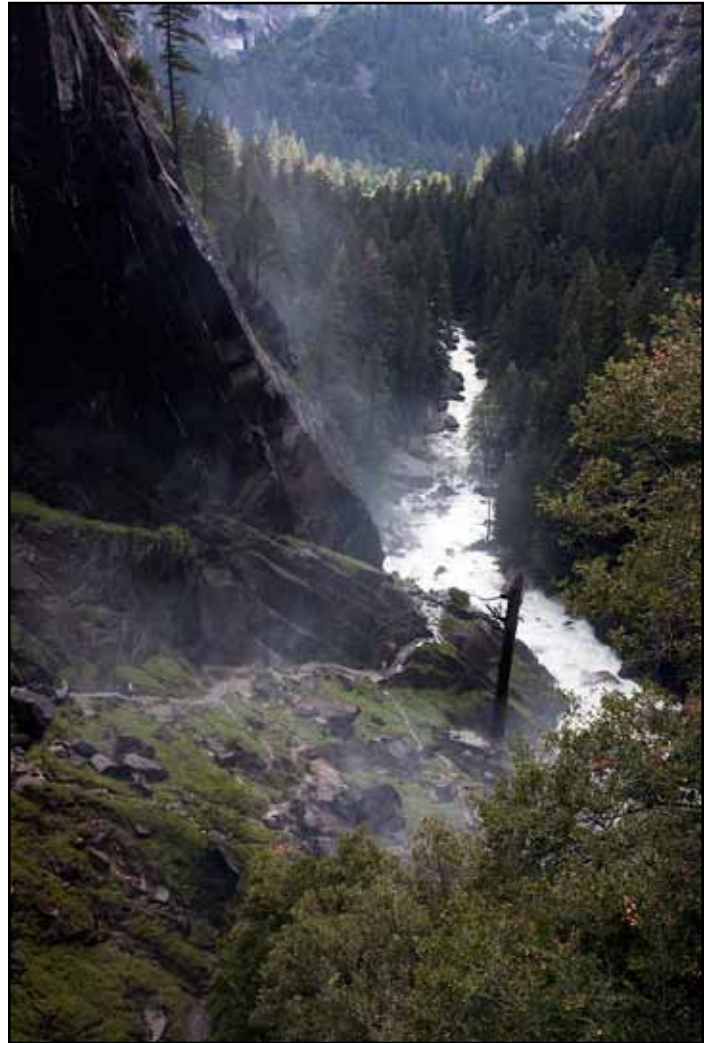
Nevada Falls Path

Finally reaching relatively level ground, we crossed the bridge above Vernal Falls and started our final descent down Mist Trail.



Bridge above Vernal Falls

The Mist Trail is a series of steep steps down the side of Vernal, with the mist of the powerful Falls soaking you to the bone. On a hot day it is priceless, but you need to keep your cameras covered and sealed from the water. The trail is rocky in places, and descending the stair steps of the Mist Trail can be hard on knees; so again the Muir Trail down the last portion is an option.



Mist Trail

For the next mile, you walk a path by the river, enjoying the water as it crashes over the boulders down the mountain to the Valley below. At the bottom, a bridge crosses back over the river (another photo Op) and will take you on a path to the Happy Isles Shuttle Stop .

Distance: 8.5 miles one way

Elevation: 7,200 ft at Glacier Point to 4,000 Valley Floor. A 3,200 ft change in elevation

Difficulty: This trail rates a 6 out of 10 for the downhill route (Glacier Point to the valley)

Cost: for bus transportation up to Glacier (cost us \$25 per person from Yosemite Lodge)

Lynne and Greg Anzenc were new members last year. Thank you for your contribution to the Gammagram!

PANORAMAS

by Bob Hubbell



Panoramas allow you to make a really wide image, 180 degrees or even all the way around for 360 degrees. As Sue Bloom points out in her book *Digital Collage and Painting*, you can even do something magical: If you shoot in a complete circle, you can see what was behind you while looking forward! There are two big steps in making a panorama: taking the pictures and stitching them together.

TAKING THE PICTURES

In taking the pictures, you simply take a sequence of pictures across the scene, overlapping them so they can be stitched together later. “Simply”, I say, but there are a few things to keep in mind while shooting.

1. Keep your camera level as you revolve around shooting your sequence. You can hand hold if you have to, but it’s much better to use a tripod. The purists remove the tripod head and use a bubble level to adjust the legs until the top of the tripod is flat. Then they put the tripod head back on, attach the camera, and level them with the bubble. You’ll see why all this is important when you stitch your images together. If the camera isn’t level, you’ll have to crop off the tops and/or bottoms of the images that are out of line, leaving you a very thin picture.

2. Overlap each image with its neighbors about 1/3. This makes it much easier to do the stitching later on.

- 3) Avoid wide-angle lenses if possible. This is because the wider the lens, the more distortion you’ll find as you swing from one side to the other. To prove this to your self, put on your widest lens, look straight at a fence or building and then swing your camera to left and right. You’ll see the parallel lines of the fence are no longer parallel as you rotate. The wider the lens, the more this is so. Shaw recommends nothing wider than 50mm but you can be your own judge.

4. Try shooting with the camera in vertical orientation. One of the problems with panoramas is that if there are many pictures in the sequence, the end result tends to be very wide from side to side but extremely narrow from top to bottom. Your picture ends up looking more like a ribbon than a photograph. Holding the camera in vertical orientation gives you more height and thus less of a ribbon. Further, usually your pictures won’t be exactly aligned up and down no matter how careful you were. Some will be a little lower and some a little higher, which will require you to crop more tightly than you may want to when you’re stitching them together.

5. Finally, start small. Make some panoramas comprised of 3-5 images to start. Get a handle on the process before committing to a larger project.

STITCHING THE PICTURES

Various software programs such as Photoshop include an option to create panoramas. In my Photoshop (CS3) you go to File > Automate > Photomerge. It then asks you to choose the images you want to string together. Then you click OK. The computer whirs while you sit back and marvel at the wonders of the digital age. Flatten the final product (The program has created a new layer for each image in the sequence), crop if you wish, and save. I believe some of the newer cameras will create a short panorama right there in the camera. Truly a marvel.

If you want full control, though, you can produce the panorama manually. You’ll need software that includes layers, opacity adjustments, layer masks, and canvas size. If you’re not comfortable with these processes, stick with the automated method. It works fine.

To work manually, proceed as follows.

1. Open one image from your series. I start with the image that’s in the middle of the sequence.

2. Increase the canvas size horizontally so there’s room for you to bring in more images from the sequence. You may want to increase it vertically a little as well, to accommodate any images that weren’t quite aligned when you were shooting. You don’t have to be precise because you can enlarge more later if you need to, and you’ll crop the whole thing when you’re done.

3. Bring in another image, one that was next to your middle picture. It will be on its own layer.

4. Lower the opacity of this second image so you can still see it but you can also see through it to the middle image that you started with.

5. Use the move tool and the arrow keys to adjust the position of the second image so it’s perfectly aligned with the middle image. You will be concentrating on the 1/3 overlap that you included when you were shooting.

6. Bring the second image’s opacity back up to 100%. It will be on Layer #2. You’ll usually see a hard line where the border of #2 overlaps with #1. continued on page 5

PANORAMAS CONTINUED

7. We want to get rid of that hard line. To do so, create a layer mask on Layer #2. (In Photoshop: Layers > Layer Mask > Reveal All.)

8. Now use a black brush to paint along that hard line. Use a soft brush. Voila! The hard line disappears and you have a seamless blend of your two images. You can flatten if you wish.

9. It's a good idea to save at this point.

10. Bring in the next image and go through the whole process again. Starting from the middle image, you can

build one side at a time or alternate, adding an image on the left and then one on the right, etc.

11. When you've finished, flatten the final product and crop.

Was all this manual work worth it? Probably not unless you're a dedicated geek. Let the software do the work through its automated process. Finally, if you do a long sequence such as 360 degrees around, you'll end up with a final product that may be something like 30 inches wide and 2 3/4 inches tall! Send me a postcard when you figure out what to do with an image like that.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bob Hubbell

IMPORTANT! We need a few volunteers. Especially, we need directors for the General Meetings (Digital), and for Nature and Travel for 2010-2012. Our current directors will finish their terms this December. Remember that the fun and learning that we have depends on people volunteering as officers. You'll enjoy being on the Board: Nice, interesting people, and good photographers. Talk with the current directors. See what's involved. Step up! Gives us a hand!

On Labor Day weekend Old Sac usually celebrates Gold Rush Days. Old sac is transformed back to the 1850's, with dirt streets, horses and wagons, gunfights, lots of people in costume, etc. And the State Fair runs until Labor Day.

NATURE by Donna Sturla

We will have our next **COMPETITION** for the Nature Division on Wednesday, September 16th. Please consider showing new images (not ones that you took three years ago), as there are plenty of photo ops you can take advantage of, right now.

Last week I spent an early morning at the Yolo Wildlife Basin and found lots of egrets, blue herons, black-necked stilts, and very interesting flowers and reeds all over. The early morning light or sunset would be best but even in mid-day you can find interesting shots. And you don't have to drive far to get there, that's the best part.

Please send your images to me at ddsturla@surewest.net. Remember to size them correctly (1024 X 768) with a 100 dpi resolution, and put your **LAST NAME** before the name of the image. I look forward to receiving your beautiful nature images soon !

DIGITAL by Dolores Frank

The Digital meeting is scheduled for September 8th... (second Tuesday of the month). Competition for Digital and Prints.

If you have a makeup, please check with Dolores Frank to see how many images you need to submit. We have only one more competition this year and it will probably be in November. If you are new to the club, you are welcome to join in the competition by submitting as many make-ups as it takes to bring you current.

Our October meeting hasn't been decided as yet. I will keep you posted.

As you all know by now, the next few months are the last months I'll be leading this group. I urge you to consider becoming involved in the leadership of the club. It is rewarding in many ways. Talk with me or with Bob Hubbell, or with any of the other division leaders. The message will always be the same. Yes, it is more work and yes, it does feel good to be involved with the members and to get to know them better.

Step out of the sidelines.

TRAVEL by Truman Holtzclaw

Wednesday September 16, will be **COMPETITION**. Send your travel images to Charlie Willard: [<cwillard@winfirst.com>](mailto:cwillard@winfirst.com) Also please send a carbon copy (C.C.) to me at [<scctravel@comcast.net>](mailto:scctravel@comcast.net). This will give us a backup Charlie has volunteered to do the travel competition this month. Those of you that have already sent me your images, I will forward them to Charlie. September the 13th is the last day to submit travel images. Any received after that will be entered as "Make-ups" in the November competition.

Flying to Iowa With Glen and Lynne Cunningham By Hitchhiker, Sande Parker

20 July 2009

In a Cessna 182 – November 735 Papa Alpha – with a great number of big jack rabbits leaping and scrambling off to the side, we lift off for Des Moines, Iowa. With a planned overnight stop along the way, we are flying about 9500 feet above Earth, roughly following Hwy 80.. If you've never done it I highly recommend the experience. This plane has the wing located above the cabin so for a photographer there can be no better thrill than having plenty of open space to focus thru. With my seat belt fastened, low and tight, I have the comfort of the back right seat with plenty of room on a travel bag to take notes, convenient since I'm left handed.... When you fly with Glen he thinks of everything. He was quick to explain everything before I even thought of the question...

We stop for gas in Lovelock, NV where it takes a very tall ladder to reach the fuel cap. The scenery is constantly changing, seemingly just an arms length below. Over the headphones we hear that a military plane is refueling in the air! Imagine! We see Promontory Point close by – this is where the silver spike for the Railroad was placed. We are experiencing turbulence and have risen to about 11,500'. The crosswind at our planned next destination is 27 mph so we are flying on to Rawlins, WY for the night. This is BIG SKY and BIG WINDS country.

The next morning we are back at 9,500' altitude with a fuel stop planned for Tekamah, Nebraska. Yesterday the scenery was that of undulating mountain tops, today we have come to Nebraska farm land. The varied shades of green and yellow make for fantastic patterns for the camera. The Tekamah landing strip is home to a group of crop dusters. With their bright yellow planes, they are constantly taking off and landing as Glen and Lynne refuel the plane. Landing behind us was the new Security Chief for The American Embassy in Marakesh. He had chosen to take his own 6-seater plane with retractable wheels over to his new assignment. He planned to fly across the Atlantic via Newfoundland, Greenland, England, and across France on his way to his new home.

Leaving here at this time for Des Moines means heavy weather ahead of us. Glen, our optimistic pilot, called it "not ideal" weather. This means we will be doing "scud running" or running under the clouds to Des Moines. This was an incredible experience for the 'hitchhiker' as I was able to photograph above the clouds and then include the clouds and the multi colored fields as we passed below the clouds. We landed safely and my rental car was waiting. Glen and Lynne continued on to Minnesota where I would join them 10 days later.

31 July

Now, as a seasoned passenger (hitchhiker), I'm ready for the return trip. I've got my earplugs and my headphones on and am ready to fly. But before we left Minnesota I was able to photograph in the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and to take a paddle wheeler down the Mississippi. The camera was busy recording old, tall, metal sculptures that said "Gold Medal Flour" and "Pillsbury Flour" all left from the successful years of the grain business.

Glen's plane is tied down in Eden Prairie, MN at Flying Cloud Aviation. This is a large facility and fueling is done for you. For this section of the journey home we are following I-90 until it intersects I-80. We stopped in Wall, South Dakota for ice cream and a weather



check. There is weather everywhere around us – wind, clouds; a photographers dream...Perhaps a pilots nightmare... You may know of Wall, it has the famous, huge drugstore. There are lots of RV'ers and motorcyclists here. Every parking spot is taken. We walked into town from the landing strip. Many motorcyclists are heading for Sturgis, South Dakota.. The RV'ers seem to have no destination other than to have a good time. The walk into town was reasonably calm but 30 minutes later the walk back to the plane is so WINDY it seemed for every two steps forward you took one step back. We took off in what seemed to me to be gale force winds but Glen handled everything with such calmness that it felt like an easy takeoff....

The return trip allowed me to think about my favorite captured images, my favorite meals and my genealogy discoveries... At 10,500' it is still very windy – 'gusty' takes on a whole new meaning. It is icing at 11,000' – we aren't going up there. We are stopping for the night in Rawlins, WY.

Rain on windshield before we landed...Great photos of rain coming out of the clouds. A BIG wind and rain storm came through Rawlins just after we checked into our hotel – timing is everything.

The next morning, instead of the Jack Rabbits we experienced leaving California, we were entertained by two deer leaping straight legged out of the plane's way. As we were leaving, another plane similar to ours flew in to drop off a teenager back to the bosom of his waiting family. The owner of the landing strip took off in a twin engine, 6-seater to pick up a charter. It's a busy day.

We fly over Green River, WY where there is a dirt landing strip optimistically called "The Greater Green River Inter-galactic Space Port". Flying over Wyoming, the advance of the great Glaciers of the past is very evident. We are back following I-80 again. There is snow on the Uinta Mountains south of us.

We land at Tooele, UT, air strip for fuel and a porta-potty break. This landing strip is used by parachutists. Today they are having a \$50 special so the take offs and aerial landings of the parachutists are very active. The camera is capturing hands assembling parachutes, parachutists in the sky, and landings in the designated locations. This is a happy hitchhiker...

We are on our last leg home. Our weather pattern is calm but all around us there are storms and clouds... We glide to a smooth landing in Rio Linda. Ron is waiting. Life is good. Thank you Glen and Lynne for a Lifetime experience.



VENDORS

RAFFLES

George Lepp Richard Menzies
Keith and Annette Walklett First Light Photographers Charles Guider Marilyn Newton Peter Lang Dolores Frank Sam Shaw

Fotoclave 2009



Balloons © George Lepp

HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST

A Weekend of Photography
 Oct 30 - Nov 1, 2009
 Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center
 Modesto, California

BANQUET SEMINARS

SAT LUNCH PHOTO COMPETITION

FOTOCLAVE REGISTRATION FORM

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Honors _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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May we share you e-mail with Fotoclave presenters or vendors? Yes _____ No _____

Camera Club Council or Other Affiliation _____

Registration Fee Individual \$50. Couple \$75. \$ _____

Saturday Lunch \$25. each
 Chicken Fajita Salad _____ Turkey Wrap _____ \$ _____

Saturday Evening Banquet \$50. each
 Vegetarian _____ Asiago Chicken _____ Herb Crusted Prime Rib _____ \$ _____

Saturday night George Lepp Presentation Only --(Non Registered Attendees) \$10. each \$ _____
\$60 if attending the banquet also.

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please send registration form and check made out to Fotoclave 2009
 to Jean Harris 1575 S Helm Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727
 For Information: (559) 255 2236 or jraisty@aol.com

For room reservation contact the hotel directly: **DOUBLETREE HOTEL MODESTO** (209) 525-300
 or on line <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/DSTO-DT-FTC-20091030/index.jhtml>