

**A Song for the Asking**  
***The Electronic Newsletter of***  
***EarthSong Photography,***  
***America the Beautiful Photography Workshops,***  
***and***  
***Photography with Heart Workshops: Walking in Beauty***

July 31, 2007

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## **Hello to All**

If knowing “the truth” is the state of grace that will make me free, I despair more and more that I shall ever come to that place which I will recognize by the name “freedom.” Yet I am not disheartened at the prospect of living an indentured life; which is not to say that truth does not exist, but rather that it is often dependent on many things, some of which are not merely inconsistent with each other, but are, not uncommonly, downright contradictory and diametrically opposed. Truth comes in many forms, spiritual, for one, and scientific; and the fact that there is more than one variety is, perhaps, indication that “absolute” is not likely to be found among its long-term qualities, except as it may relate to one’s own



individual life and being. It is only with **my** truth that I can be rightly concerned; yours is for you to decide. Beyond that, as I see it, there remains little other than the mutual obligations of the courtesy of listening and the dignity of respect. This seems particularly so with spiritual truths. In the realm of the scientific variety there

may be somewhat more factual certainty, but even here, as we have been forced to acknowledge time and again, what we know as truth is more of an on-going process of the accumulation of information which gives us, at any given moment in time merely the possibility of making the best choice we can based on the data we have. Interpretation, itself, is almost never completely objective. Even if my description of the data is without bias, my interpretation of it is filtered through the lens of the values I bring to the task, through the way in which I see the world, the assumptions I make about what is important and the priorities by which I arrange those assumptions. Very few of us, if any, can entirely escape the

stigma of that reality; so I tend to look at the underlying pre-suppositions of the interpreter as I judge my estimation of the quality of their interpretations. What is of importance to them in their worldview? What values do they espouse? What are the priorities that are/were used in the ordering of their daily lives?

All of which brings me to consider the life of one of my personal heroes. She was a scientist, whose most significant observations of natural phenomena continue to evoke controversy more than forty years after her death, even now in the hundredth anniversary of the year of her birth. Yet, even if I read the arguments of her detractors in a light most favorable to them, most of her observations continue to ring true; but it is not her science so much that endears her to me; rather her underlying assumptions of what is really important in life and the values with which we seek to make that life as meaningful as possible.

By most accounts **Rachel Carson** was a loner and a



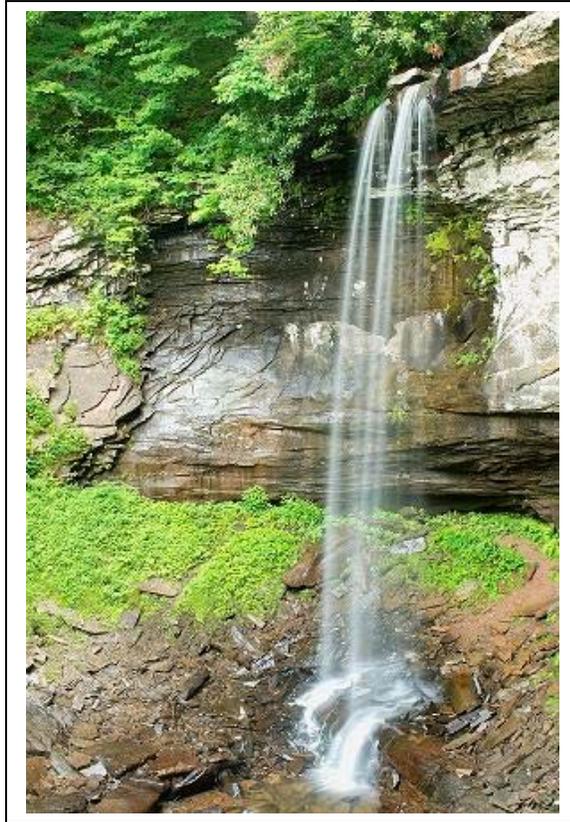
shy young woman, who loved to roam the woods and fields surrounding her Allegheny River Valley home near Springdale, Pennsylvania, where she was born in 1907. Her father was a small farmer, but it was her mother who introduced her to the world of nature, leading Rachel and her older brother and sister on nature-studying excursions along the river and its environs. As shy as she may have



been, she was also very bright; an avid reader; and a talented writer, whose first story was published when she was just eleven. She began college an English major but changed to biology in her junior year. In 1932 she received her Masters Degree in Zoology from Johns Hopkins University. Although her goal was to remain at Johns

Hopkins to complete her doctoral studies, it was not to be so. In 1934 she left graduate school to find a fulltime teaching position to support her aging parents. To make the situation worse, her father passed away in 1935, leaving Rachel as the primary provider for her elderly mother. Faced with this necessity, she accepted a temporary position with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries using her writing

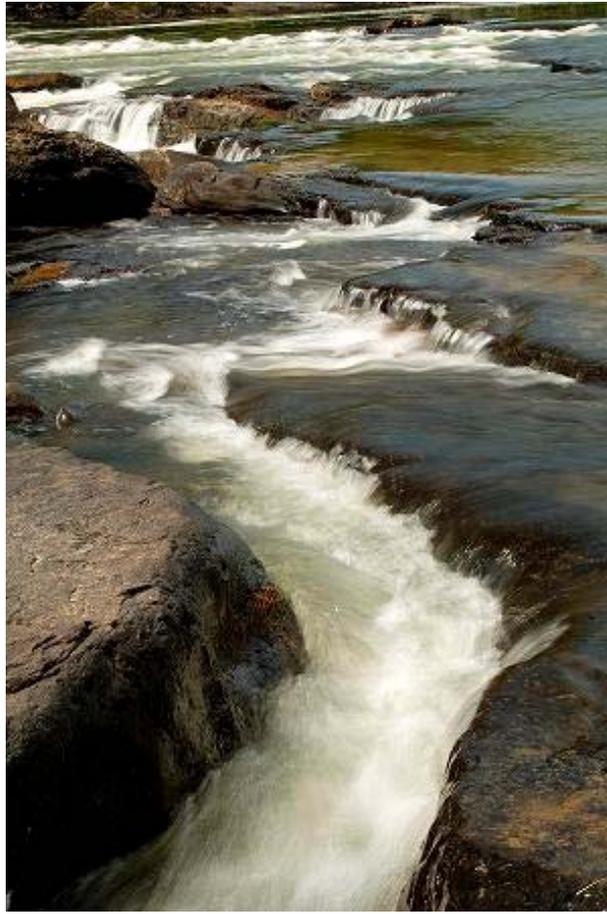
skills to produce a variety of materials used by the agency. Her supervisor was so pleased with the quality of her work that he worked to help her secure a fulltime position, which she ultimately obtained, as a junior aquatic biologist, becoming only the second woman to be hired fulltime at the bureau. During this same period she began submitting her writing to several newspapers and magazines with great success; but it was also during this time that family tragedy struck again. Her older sister died, leaving Carson to support not only her mother, but her two young nieces as well. During the waning years of the Great Depression, as well as the span of World War II and the early post-war period, Carson continued balancing her roles of fisheries scientist, science and nature writer, and extended family breadwinner. Some of her major works were produced, including *Under the Sea Wind* and *The Sea Around Us*, two-thirds of what would become, along with *The Edge of the Sea*, her enduring sea trilogy. Her work as a government biologist continued to be seen in an equally favorable light, as she ultimately rose to the position of Chief Editor of Publications for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1949.



I offer you these details not as any sort of in-depth biographical sketch of Rachel Carson, but simply to give you a feel for the person we are dealing with: a woman of great talent and energy who accepts her perceived responsibilities to her family at the same time she is reaching with all her strength to climb the heights of her chosen field; who, by the work she does and the way in which she does it, demonstrates a great love and caring for the world around her, and especially the creatures of that world, including her fellow human beings; who sees nature as always being entitled to a place at the table when there is any discussion of how nature's resources are to be shepherded and developed by man for man's use and convenience. These are the values that shape her and the pre-suppositions on which her priorities are based. Notice, if you will, that I did not mention monetary reward or personal profit, or even societal acclaim.

By now you are probably beginning to at least be somewhat suspicious that I am taking you down a fairly tortuous road that will lead to some mention of the literary effort for which Rachel Carson is best remembered, and for which she is either hailed as one of the patron saints of the modern environmental movement, or vilified as the author of an honorable mention to the "Ten Most Harmful Books of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries". But *Silent Spring* is the furthest thought from my mind. In 1956 tragedy struck Carson's family for a third time when one of the

nieces she had raised died at the age of 36, leaving Rachel to care for her now-orphaned, five-year-old, grandnephew, **Roger Christie**. Carson responded by adopting the child, and it is this relationship to which I want to draw your attention, for it reaches to the very core of a matter that has been weighing heavily on my mind. At her untimely death from cancer in 1964 at the age of 56,



Rachel Carson was working on an altogether different, for her, sort of opus. The text had been published in 1956 in **Women's Home Companion** under the title "*Help Your Child to Wonder.*" In 1965, it appeared posthumously in book form as ***The Sense of Wonder***. She had intended to expand the text, but somehow never found the time. She had intended a dedication, but it was left to her biographer, **Linda Lear**, to make that dedication - "This is for Roger."

Nearly three-and-a-half years before his mother's death, they had both visited Rachel, by then enjoying success as a fulltime writer and living part of each year on her beloved Maine coast.

Carson had delighted in introducing the boy to the wild beauty of the rugged shoreline, its many moods and mysteries; and she had delighted equally in the

innocent curiosity of his observations and questions. In ***Wonder***, to my mind, more than in any of her other works, we find Rachel Carson, the person; we find her clearest vision of nature and of the human connection to the natural world, and especially the process by which that connection can be created and fostered in children. It is a process based on, as she says, having fun rather than teaching. "A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.... “I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, **it is not half so important to know as to feel.** If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow. The years of early childhood are the time to prepare the soil. Once the emotions have been aroused – a sense of the beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of sympathy, pity, admiration, or love – then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response. Once found, it has lasting meaning.”

What a marvelous vision for sharing nature with our children, for engendering respect for and stewardship of the great beauty and tremendous resources of Planet Earth; and how utterly frightening to consider that this beautiful envisioning seems to be the exact opposite of the current state of reality described by **Richard Louv** in his chilling assessment of the loss of contact with nature that is the actual experience of many, if not most, of America’s children in our present society. ***Last Child in the Woods*** is a sobering, even painful look at what passes for contact with nature for many children, or more accurately, its absence, and the effect of this on our young people.

Consider this, today there are well-documented trends in children’s lives toward higher incidences of obesity, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and



depression. At the same time, Louv argues, compared to 1970 the area around our homes in which children are allowed to explore on their own has shrunk by over seventy percent; the average eight-year-old is better able to identify cartoon characters than native species in his/her own community; from 2000-2005, the rate at which doctors prescribed anti-depressants to children doubled; and recent studies are indicating that **overuse** of computers has an adverse impact of the development of a child’s mind. Louv’s central thesis is simply this: Direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development – physical,

emotional, and spiritual. Beyond that it is an effective therapy for the disturbing trends earlier-mentioned – obesity, ADD, and depression. As he points out, the children of the current generation are the first generation to be raised without meaningful contact with the natural world. His term for this condition is nature-



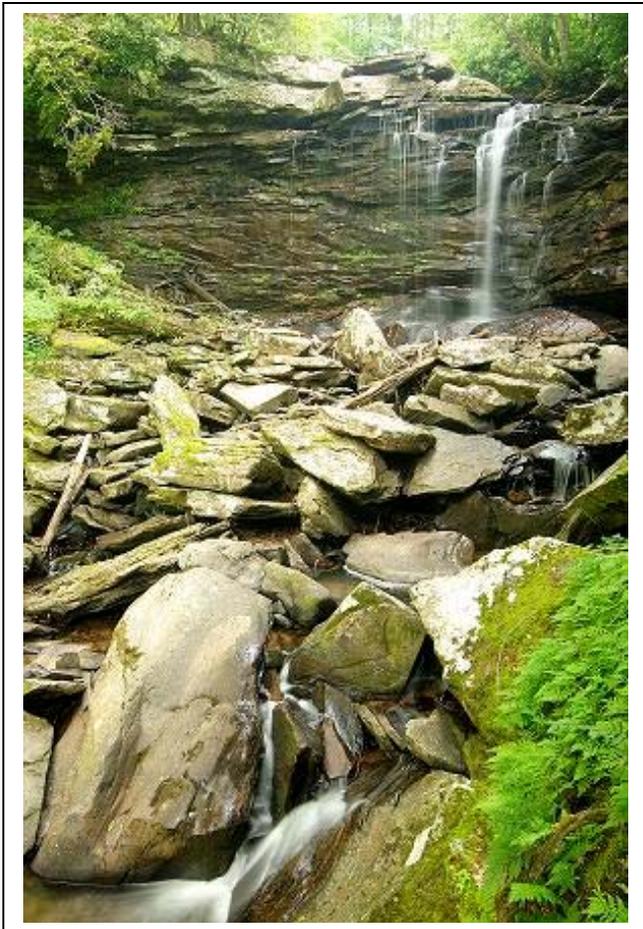
deficit disorder, but he is quick to point out and to stress that the term is not intended in any sort of diagnostic sense, but rather merely descriptive of the observations being made. Living, as I do, in a very rural section of a still mostly rural county in the Western North Carolina mountains it is difficult for me to appreciate all of the truth of what Louv is telling me. In my neighborhood, children are everywhere in the outdoors, although even here they do seem to stay closer to home than I remember myself staying in the less-than-rural environs of Athens and Milledgeville, Georgia. Perhaps one of the factors therein is, as Louv suggests, the increased litigiousness in our society. Others might well include increasing loss of free time in the face of our ever-increasingly structured and

organized culture, as well as the fear that many parents have as to threats to their children, both real and perceived, in the natural world beyond their sphere of influence and control. Nor is it difficult for me to notice, as I witness organized youth sports activities in the community, that so many more kids than I remember in my generation appear to be significantly overweight and out of shape; and I don't think I have failed to take into account the tendency that each generation seems to have toward being myopic about its own good qualities vis-à-vis the less-than-desirable ones of its successors. And who could fail to regard the almost biological appendage character of the electronic devices wielded by increasing numbers of children as they move through their daily lives. Little wonder that the natural world has taken a back seat in their classification of what is important in life, as it more and more appears to have little relevance to what they are and do.

If I attempted to catalog all of the unhealthy circumstances that I see in the lives of today's children, I should end up re-writing *Last Child* for you on these pages, and that is the last thing I want to do; but I very much encourage you to read the book and then to observe in your own life whether Louv's arguments have merit. And if they do, then I would suggest that we are very close to being at bat in the bottom of the ninth inning with two out, and that we had very seriously better begin to not only consider, but to become involved in seeking solutions to what needs to be done. Louv has some thoughtful suggestions, but I'll leave them to your reading. He is, at least, hopeful that there are positive measures that can be taken. Recently I had a very encouraging meeting with **Dr. Carmeleta Monteith**, who is involved in curriculum development for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) schools. She readily agreed that we are not doing well when it comes to providing our children with meaningful contact with the natural world. We talked about ways to use photography in nature as one approach to providing children in the Cherokee school system with a way to have more of a connection with the natural environment; and if things work out, I may one day before long be involved in a program that will seek to do just that.

There is so very much that needs to be done and so much, indeed, that can be done; and the mere fact that I sit writing these words on a laptop computer says that I am either a hypocrite, or that I believe that there is a balance that can be achieved between our seemingly blind love affair with electronic gadgetry and our need to find, nurture, and sustain ways of all of us to know and appreciate nature in our lives. I am humbled at the thought that there are people like **Dr. Wayne Dyer** and **Wendell Berry** who abstain from the use even of typewriters as they fill our world with the beautiful thoughts and ideas that flow from their beings. Their lives convince me that there is certainly an equilibrium that can be found in our worship of the deities of technology.

For a number of years I have been interested in that genre of motion pictures that might best be described as post-apocalyptic, movies like *Blade Runner* and the Mad Max series: *Road Warrior*, *Mad Max*, and *Mad Max: Beyond Thunder Dome*. My interest relates almost exclusively to observing how human



society and nature are portrayed in the supposed world to come; and it is of noteworthiness to me that in most of them society is nearly always shown as existing in large metropolitan centers, densely populated, conflict-ridden, and technology-dependant for its very existence, while nature is typically seen as a basically desolate and semi-lifeless state, sometimes with small pockets of green, growing things that are hidden away and barely known to exist, where most humans seldom, if ever, go. My interest stems from my observation that over the course of societal evolution what was yesterday's science and cultural fictions have a very high correlation with what become today's science and cultural facts. The world of these films is a world in which I cannot imagine that beauty can comfortably exist. As for truth, I become less and less certain; but there seems to be a truism that says, "Be very careful what you wish for, or you will surely get it."

## **What's Now?**

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth  
find reserves of strength  
that will endure as long as life lasts.

**Rachel Carson**  
*The Sense of Wonder*

Earlier in July, around the middle of the month, **Kendall Chiles** and I decided to make a short trip to southeastern West Virginia. Nancy, Les, and I had met in Summersville on a couple of occasions over the past year to have **Photography with Heart** business and planning sessions, but I had never photographed in the area. Kendall, on the other hand, has spent a little more time there and had some suggestions as to where some interesting images might be found. Thus

armed, and with our usual contingency of maps and guide books and some last minute advice from **Ernie Page**, who loves the Smokies, too, but happens to live in West Virginia, off we went in search of somewhere almost heaven. All but the first image in the



**Hello to All** section of this newsletter, as well as the image above, came from the trip. As with the Southern Appalachians of my home, most folks tend to think of spring and fall as the times to photograph the beautiful old uplifts of the Mountaineer State, but if you think that way, you'll preclude yourself from some

truly magnificent scenery and magical places. I have found that the appreciation of beauty anywhere always serves to enhance my appreciation of beauty everywhere; and so it was with the watershed of the awesome New River. I returned from the weekend to the Smokies renewed in my awareness that the mountains of Eastern North America are as majestic as any on earth.



It was apparent that the drought which has gripped most of the eastern half of the country since early spring has not spared the New River Valley, although I did have the impression that it has not been quite as severe there as here. But now as I write in July's waning days, it has rained in

Beaverdam on three consecutive mornings, and yesterday the water level in the Smokies streams seemed almost normal. The water itself may tend to run off quickly as well as be soaked up in a hurry, so it remains to be seen how the levels will appear in the days after the precipitation ceases, but I can be cautiously encouraged, as well as grateful for what has fallen. I will say again that it really doesn't matter whether the water levels are high or low, the beauty of a Smokies stream remains, always offering images to remember for anyone wanting to photograph them.

Oconaluftee, Kephart Prong, Walker Camp Prong, Road Prong, West Prong, Little River, Middle Prong, Middle Prong of Little Pigeon, Cosby Creek, Big Creek, all have wonderful places, sometimes made even more accessible during times of low water.



While lower water levels do not necessarily bode ill for stream images in the Smokies, neither can they portend good over the long term for the plant life of these ancient mountains; however, for now, there seems to be enough to sustain

an amazing year for wildflowers. There have been more Turk's-cap (*Lilium superbum*) lilies this year than I can ever remember; and while their bloom has just about ended, there are a few newly opened blossoms that can yet be found in the higher elevations along Newfound Gap Road and Clingman's Dome Road. As the Turk's-caps are fading, other species are coming in. Late July and early-to-mid-August is the time of the big yellow flowers and there are several species blooming densely in places right now. Sundrops (*Oenothera fruticosa*), from the evening primrose family, can be found along Newfound Gap Road,



along with wood tickseed (*Coreopsis major*), coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata* var. *humilis*), and wide-leaved sunflower (*Helianthus decapetalus*), all from the aster family. Sometimes they are found in familial groups and other times as single species.; but either way, they are commonly found in large clusters. Clingman's Dome Road is another good location for them. Wide-angle landscapes, intimate landscapes, macro images, and abstracts can often be found among them, almost

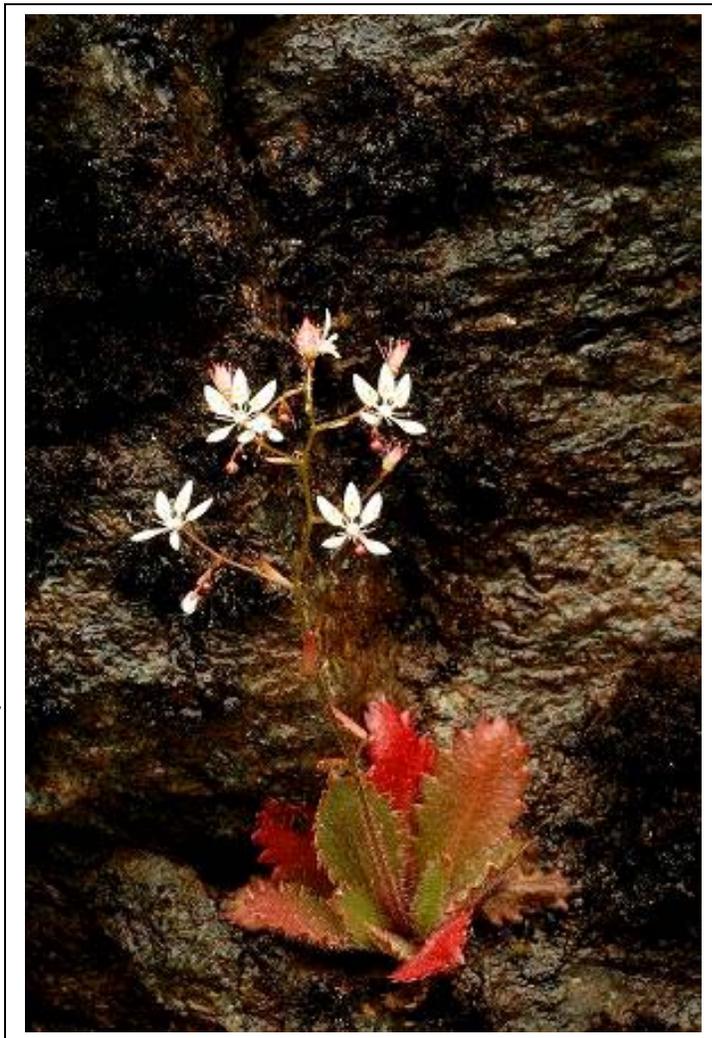


without moving your tripod. Tall bellflower (*Campanulastrum americanum*) is a member of the bellflower family whose flowers don't really look like bells, in contrast to southern harebell, (*Campanula divaricata*) whose blossoms are very much bell-shaped. Both are blooming now, and typically in the mid-to-higher elevations. Both jewelweeds, pale (*Impatiens pallida*) and orange, or spotted, (*I. capensis*) are blooming now in all elevations. They are truly wonderful macro subjects. Fly poison (*Amianthium muscivomicum*) can still be found in the higher parts of its range. Mountain bugbane (*Cimicifuga americana*) and its cousin, black cohosh (*C. racemosa*) are blooming extensively between 3500-5000'. Smell is the best way to distinguish them; black cohosh is unlikely to win any aroma therapy contests. A very beautiful

orchid to begin looking for is the crane-fly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*), which I

have always found along the lower end of the Deep Creek Trail near Tom's Branch Falls. It is fairly common, but usually seen as a single plant. Along Clingman's Dome Road can be found the delicate beauty of the Mountain St.

John's-wort's yellow blossoms. Also in the higher elevations, but in some low-lying places as well, can soon be found the inflorescences of Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*), a flowering saprophyte that gets nutrition from decaying organic matter. Round Bottom Road is a good place to find it. There are, as well, some really nice examples of fire pink (*Silene virginica*) still blooming on Heintooga Ridge along the roadside. I must admit that I don't find the delicate beauty of Michaux's saxiphrage (*Saxiphraga michauxii*) particularly photogenic, but I am very much attracted to its tenacity, growing on rocky outcroppings of the



higher elevations – like the example here – so I am drawn to photograph it. It can be found now along Clingman's Dome Road.

By the end of the month two species of particular note will be blooming, cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and yellow-fringed orchid (*Platanthera ciliaris*). Cardinal flower blooms along streams of the mid-to-lower elevations, while yellow-fringed orchid is a dry-slope forest dweller in places like Cherokee Orchard Road. Also by month's end many of the members of the goldenrod (*Solidago*) genus will be blooming and adding the potential for warm golden hues to landscapes in Cades Cove and elsewhere. So if you think that the potential for photographing wildflowers diminishes once the rhododendrons have bloomed, you might want to reconsider.

In the past several days the high-low temperature variations in combination with the relative humidity levels have worked to create some wonderful atmospheric in the park. Broken light and cloud textures have helped to reveal some very

interesting landscape possibilities in the higher elevations. If this pattern continues for a while longer, places like Thomas Divide will be well worth a visit.



God-beams as compositional elements are frequently involved with this.

August is the last full month in which to photograph sunset from Morton Overlook and have the sun in your composition. This will also be true

for a few days in September and then the solar disc will slip behind Sugarland Mountain and not be seen as it disappears below the horizon again until the latterpart of April next year. Of course, there will be other reasons to photograph Morton Overlook as fall arrives, but we'll talk about that later. As August progresses, Luftee

Overlook will become more and more appealing as a sunrise location, for the sun is moving from left to right along the crest of the Smokies, and by late August it will be rising behind the highest part of the foreground ridge, almost as seen here. The



sunrise from Clingman's Dome is still very appealing, and soon there will be two very viable choices, which will be available from the beginning of September until the first of December when Clingman's Dome Road closes for the winter.

August often gets a good bit of negative press for being the month of the Dog Days, and, indeed, it sometimes strains the imagination to find something really nice to say about a hot, humid August afternoon, when the best gift you can think of is a monstrous thunderstorm to clear the air a little and cool things off just a bit. Mid-summer is technically about August 5<sup>th</sup>, and I often wondered if **Shakespeare** may have been reacting from the influence of a heat-oppressed

brain when he penned the lines to *A Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and its sprightly shenanigans. Yet there is also much to recommend the eighth month in the Great Smoky Mountains: wonderful wildflowers, the potential for electrifying atmospherics, and often some great light to illuminate it all. For that I'm willing to try my best to withstand a little heat.

## A Tip is Worth...?

The exceeding beauty of the earth, in her splendor of life, yields  
a new thought with every petal. The hours when the mind  
is absorbed by beauty, are the only hours when we really live,  
so that the longer we can stay among these things  
so much the more is snatched from inevitable Time...  
To be beautiful and to be calm, without mental fear,  
is the ideal of nature.  
If I cannot achieve it, at least I can think it.

**Richard Jefferies**  
*The Life of the Fields*

Looking and thinking are the two most important tools that any photographer, especially a landscape photographer, possesses. These are the tools that help you decide what your subject is and what you want to say about it. What you

ultimately choose to say is determined by your selections from among the two subsets of those tools: the **mechanical** tools of camera, lenses, filters, etc.; and the **artistic** and **creative** tools of perspective, timing, and light. What I am describing for you are the gross component parts of the process of designing a



photograph. Even when circumstances seem to occur so quickly that the response to them appears to be almost knee-jerk, it is never that unconscious. The effective construction of an image comes from a carefully considered and well-executed plan involving an awareness of the elements of design and the most appropriate choices, in that moment, of the ways to express them; and the more you work to make this process a part of your waking awareness, the more your images will represent the artistry of your vision.

One of my very favorite resources for learning about this is **Molly Bang's *Picture This: How Pictures Work***. This wonderful volume is filled with information about how we see pictures, and, thus, how pictures can be crafted

that visually communicate what we really want to say and truly evoke the feelings that we really wish to arouse. Keep in mind that when we see pictures, we feel certain emotional responses based on the design elements that have been used in the image. Some of these responses are hardwired into our brains, and thus for all practical purposes subliminal, from tens of thousands of years of human evolution; some cross our conscious awareness fairly readily. Both are real and both influence how we feel about what we see. I want to talk briefly about some of the design principles she sets out.

1. **Horizontal shapes (and lines), especially smooth, flat ones, give us a sense of stability and calm.** This is so for images that emphasize overall horizontal structure, as well as those with smaller horizontal or horizontally oriented surfaces. In the latter, these areas are sensed as islands of calm. Prairies, the calm sea, and even the horizon line, itself, come to mind as instances where this is felt.

2. **Vertical shapes (and lines) are more exciting and more active.**

They imply energy and a reaching upward.

Verticals are paeans to kinetic energy of the past and future and to potential energy of the present.

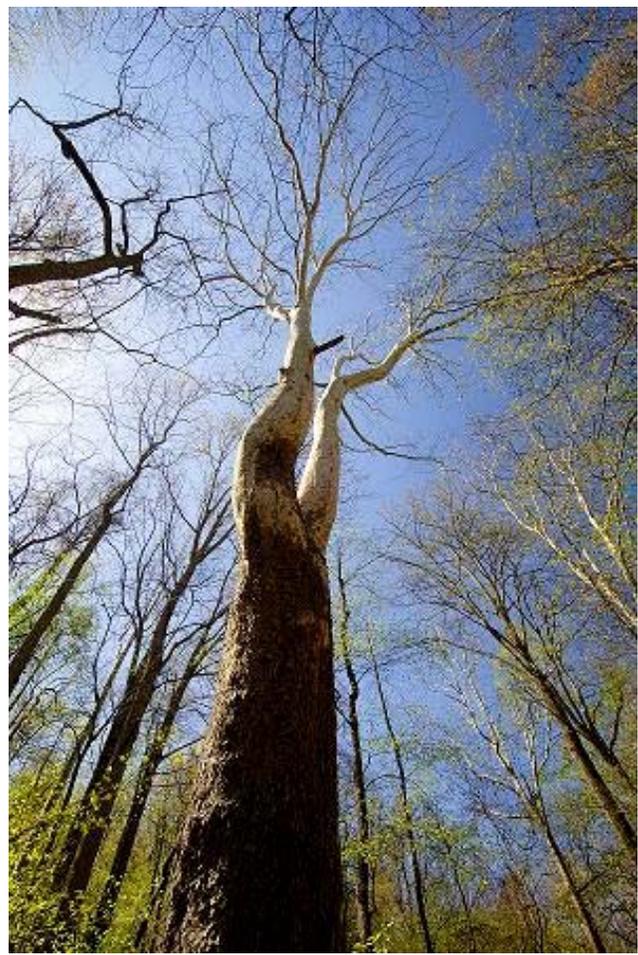
3. **Diagonal shapes (and lines) are dynamic because they imply motion and tension.**

Diagonals lead us into images as well as lead us back out into space. In an asymmetrical framing they provide a sense of depth.

Diagonals “tie” other elements, often verticals and/or horizontals, together to help create a continuum and a whole. If we imagine objects on a diagonal we have a feeling that the objects must be moving. This is

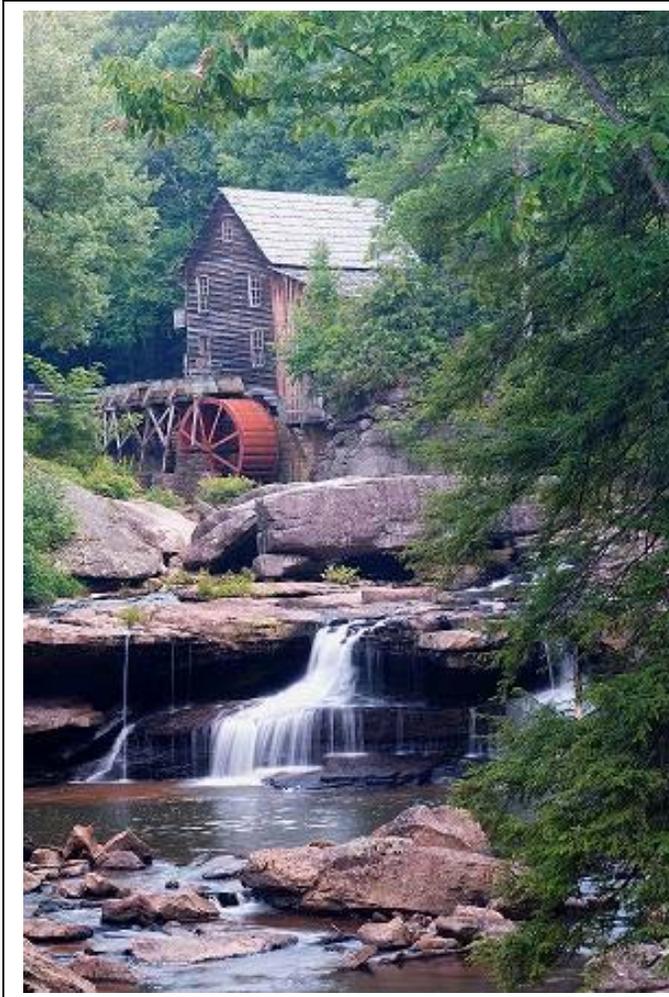
true also for our eyes, regardless of whether the movement be up or down.

We tend to read diagonals from left to right, as if they are rising or descending. If we take multiple objects of similar shape and decreasing size, and place them on a diagonal, they evoke the sense of following a diagonal trajectory. Any image that emphasizes the diagonal - whether



with shapes or colors or light or any structural element – is dynamic because the diagonal implies movement and tension.

4. **The center of the page/frame is the most effective “center of attention.” It is the point of greatest attraction.** Isn't that an interesting and different way of introducing the notion of the “bull's-eye?” The emotional response to the center of the image will obviously depend on the context, but the fact remains that it is very difficult to take our eyes away from the center of the frame when the primary subject has been placed there. They are trapped by the weight of so significant an element, and because they are thus held, they soon become bored and give up trying to see what else there may be. When the focus of attention, the main element,



shifts away from the center of the image, the picture is more dynamic. We can feel the image here flowing from left to right, and from top to bottom, downward from the mill and into the stream, and then turning as it moves right to left over the falls and out the bottom of the image. The sense of movement comes about because our eyes are encouraged to move, following the diagonals, down and forward, or up and back. We can even move outside the borders of the frame and into the larger world, since the water emptying out the bottom implies a space beyond. There are invisible lines of force that are ever-present. We are aware of gravity

pulling downward as we move across the image. We are also aware of the center of the image as our eyes pass across it and the top of the boulder becomes a resting place. We are aware of the lines of the rock and how they divide the image from top to bottom. We sense the lines of the branches as they frame the mill and lead our eyes toward it, again passing through the center of the picture. Whatever we do with it, our eyes are drawn to the center. What we do in fact choose to do determines if we are ultimately able to move beyond it, but it always influences our feelings, nonetheless.

5. **The edges and corners of the picture are the edges and corners of the picture-world.** Whether or not we are conscious of it, we are aware of it; that is, the breaking out of the rectangular frame. Like the other forces, it encourages our eyes to move in certain directions. The closer an object is the edge of the frame, the greater the tension. In the mill image on the previous page, as it occurs to me that the water can break out of the bottom, I am also aware that other objects within the frame can escape from it as well; the rocks, the trees, maybe even the mill itself; and that tension exerts an influence over how my eyes move through the image.

Molly Bang is a Caldecott Award-winning book illustrator, so when she speaks about art, I deem it worthwhile to listen; and, more and more, I come to see the photographic image as nothing at all if it is not art whose subject matter is created with the mechanical tools of cameras and lenses and sensors or strips of celluloid, rather than with the mechanical tools of brushes and pigments. The very same principles apply, and the approaches to communication and emotional arousal are the same in each case.

It is more important to worry over whether an image is effective than whether it is “pretty”; for if it is effective, it will communicate what you wish to say and arouse the feelings you wish to arouse. If you can achieve this goal, then somewhere along the way pretty will take care of itself.

## **As for Photography with Heart...**

As I walk with Beauty  
As I walk, as I walk  
The universe is walking with me  
In beauty it walks before me  
In beauty it walks behind me  
In beauty it walks below me  
In beauty it walks above me  
Beauty is on every side  
As I walk I walk with Beauty

### **Traditional Diné Prayer**

Christmas is coming early this year. Oh, of course, there's going to be one on December 25<sup>th</sup>, but there's also another one who's here now. You will probably want to get to know her as Kris, **Kris Morgan**, that is. But to me, she will always remain **Christmas**. Kris Morgan has probably attended more of Nancy's workshops than any other person on the face on the planet (although I'm sure there are several other folks in close contention, which says more than all the words I could ever come up with about the kind of person that is **Nancy Rotenberg**), and now Kris is coming to work as the official keeper and disseminator of all things informational with regard to **Natural Tapestries**, Nancy's other life, and **Photography with Heart**, the life she shares with **Les** and me. In other words, what Marion has been, Kris now is. All of you who are, or

who become, a part of our extended family, whether for one workshop, or a hundred, will quickly come to embrace this gentle and lovable soul not only for who she is, but for her many organizational skills as well. She can be reached at [Kris@NaturalTapestries.com](mailto:Kris@NaturalTapestries.com).

This past weekend Les and I led a One-day Workshop for the **CNPA-Asheville Region**. Much needed rain on Saturday forced a rescheduling, but that didn't seem to dampen many spirits; and on Sunday we spent a wonderful day along the Blue Ridge Parkway's highest stretches, on both sides of Richland Balsam. The flowers were great, the atmospherics were awesome, and the company convivial. **Kate Silvia** and **Danny Wilson** are doing excellent work as the co-coordinators of Asheville Region. I'd like to thank them for all their help in making that event the outstanding experience that it was. Kate's picnics rival those of my partner, and that's saying something. If you receive this newsletter and live in Western North Carolina and are not a member of this organization, you're missing something fun.

There are still openings for the **September 7-9** and the **September 14-16 Cades Cove Workshops**, both in **Townsend, Tennessee** at the **Talley-Ho Inn**.

If you are a member of the **CNPA-Triangle (Raleigh) Region**, the **September 7-9** event is especially for you. Cades Cove in late summer is a little-known gem of a photographic opportunity. The late blooming wildflowers include huge stands of ironweed (*Vernonia gigantea* – Tall, and *V. noveboracensis* – New York) with its electric purple flowers, and crown beard (*Verbesina occidentalis*) one of the tallest big-yellow flowered species around. Wide day-night temperature swings often result in wonderful, moody, low-lying, early morning

ground fogs, which combine with rich early light to create spectacular images from up high and at valley level. As temperatures hover around the dew point, delicate spider webs on fences and grasses become bejeweled necklaces that invite close-up exploration. The racks on the big whitetail



bucks (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are fully grown and the velvet has come off. And if that's not enough, it's the time when the black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are regularly seen munching on the acorn and cherry mast crops. Reservations at the Talley-Ho can be made by calling **(800) 448-2465**. Tuition for the workshop is **\$350**. Space is reserved by contacting me at [don@earthsongphotography.com](mailto:don@earthsongphotography.com).

The next weekend, **September 14-16**, is for **everyone else**. So far there seems to be a wonderfully diverse group of folks from all over, who share in common that they've been with Les or I at other events, and we didn't frighten them away. If you would like to join us, the information is the same as above, **Talley-Ho Inn, Townsend, Tennessee (800) 448-2465**. Same fee: **\$350**. Just remember to give the Talley-Ho the correct dates and then reserve the space with me at [don@earthsonphotography.com](mailto:don@earthsonphotography.com).

I spoke with Nancy earlier today (August 1) and must be the bearer of the sad news: The last two workshops on **Photography with Heart's** 2007 schedule are filled and have waiting lists. However – and this is the really good news – we're getting started early in **2008** with a very special workshop we're calling **Winter in the Mountains, January 31-February 3**. We'll be hosted by **Snowbird Mountain Lodge**, one of the finest B&B's in the Southern Appalachians, located at the entrance to the **Cherochala Skyway**, a mini-Blue Ridge Parkway through the **Snowbird Mountains** of Western North Carolina and the **Unicoi Mountains** of Southeastern Tennessee. Nearby are **Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest**, one of the largest stands of old-growth forest in the East, and the **Tellico River**, one of the early additions to the **National Wild & Scenic Rivers** list. The weekend we've chosen is traditionally one with a fair chance for some snow (but don't worry, you won't get stranded). Three-nights of fun, fare, and the best winter photography in North Carolina's Southern Mountains. The lodging, board, gratuities, and workshop tuition is **\$1,000-Single; \$1200 – Double, non-participating roommate; \$1800 – Double, two participants**. For reservations contact Snowbird Mountain Lodge at **(800) 941-9290** and Kris Morgan at [Kris@NaturalTapestries.com](mailto:Kris@NaturalTapestries.com). **You do not want to miss this one!**

Until next month...may the Spirit of Light guide your shutter release.

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