



The Power of Connection

by Linda Nickells

ASC Speaker in April!

Mother Nature provides the playground, and as adventurers and wanderers, we are given access to roam and to explore the world that she lends us.

As photographers, we have the ability to bring home these special places to share with our family and friends. By using social media to share our photos and stories, we extend that invitation to unmet friends. We open ourselves to opportunities and challenges to expand our comfort zones.



In this presentation, Linda Nickell takes you on her photographic journey. She invites us to locations both familiar and unknown, introducing us to the people that she's met along the way. She talks about portfolio curation,

special projects, and how she has been mentored and now serves as a mentor to others.

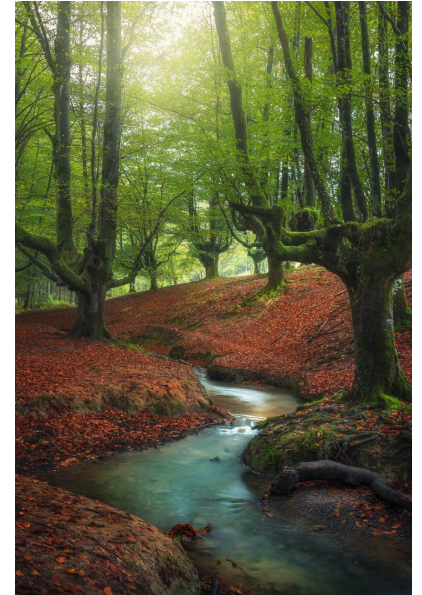
BIO:

Linda is an Austin, Texas-based photographer and the host of a weekly photography webinar, The Happiness Hour. She has been recognized by texashighways.com as one of the "Top 25 Travel Photographers to Follow on Instagram" and is the co-author, of "Composition: 15 Photography Tips to Creating Captivating Images." Her images and articles have been published commercially and used in marketing campaigns. As an active user of Instagram, she curates multiple feature accounts to inspire and promote the work of other photographers.

You can connect with Linda at:
lindanickell.com

Youtube:
[@LindaNickellHappinessHour](https://www.youtube.com/@LindaNickellHappinessHour)

Instagram:
www.instagram.com/coznlinda



How to Photograph a Solar Eclipse

by Brian Loflin

Photographing heavenly bodies has become great fun and can be quite successful in the age of today's digital cameras. It is relatively easy to do and takes little equipment beyond a digital camera and long lens.

However, for solar eclipses of the sun there is an element of safety that must be addressed. When the image of the sun is magnified and projected directly onto the photosensitive surface of the sensor damage may easily occur. Remember the days of your hand-held magnifying glass and burning leaves or pieces of paper? You are now doing that in a more sophisticated manner.

Therefore, special protection in the way of "Solar Filters" must be employed to protect camera, sensor, AND your eyesight. These filters will be discussed later.

WARNING:

Do not view the sun through your lens via the viewfinder eyepiece or via Live-View without a solar filter. Serious damage to your sensor and eyes may result.

PLANNING

Depending upon where you live and the path of the sun and moon across the earth, various types of eclipses may be observed. The best is the Full Eclipse where the moon completely blocks the sun from your point of view. Next is called an Annular Eclipse where the moon is a bit more distant from earth and not quite fully blocking the sun, presenting a "Ring of Fire" corona of light around the moon. And last is simply a partial



eclipse based upon the moon barely crossing the circle of the sun for a few minutes.
Solar Eclipses (above, L to R) Full, Annular, Partial

There are several programs that can assist in your planning for a solar eclipse. NASA will provide detailed maps of the predicted path of the eclipse across the earth. To get the full effect of the eclipse, you should be as close to the centerline of the path of visibility as possible.

Other programs such as MrEclipse.com, LightTrac, PhotoPils, or The Photographer's Ephemeria (TPE) can give good planning details as to where, when, and camera data.

Regardless of the programs you use, it is always a good idea to scout the area before the eclipse. Use Google earth to find a good spot on the computer then go to the site and spend some time looking for the best vantage point, visual obstructions, and other criteria to a great composition.

EQUIPMENT

There are a few equipment issues to address.

First a solid tripod is of great importance. As the image of the sun may be magnified six to ten times in the camera, or more, stability of your camera and lens is of major importance to assure tack sharp images, free from vibrations. My suggestion is to use the biggest, baddest, and heaviest tripod you can find. And whatever the tripod, consider weighing it down with sandbags, bags of rocks, or even a camera bag.

Once the tripod is selected, it may be a good idea to practice with a lawn chair so you can be lower and more comfortable for an hour or two.

It would be good to have a long lens in the range of 400mm to 600mm, so your projected image is as large as possible. Zoom lenses in that range are ideal as they may be zoomed to give a variety of compositions. Don't be discouraged, even lenses in the 200mm range will work if planning to crop in post processing.

The important item is a solar filter. As mentioned previously, this filter will prevent damage to the camera sensor and your eyes. There are several on the market. A list is provided at the end of this discussion.

The important thing to know is that Solar Filters are more than simple Neutral Density (ND) filters. In addition to reducing the strength of light that enters the lens by about as much as twenty stops, they also have additional filtration elements to eliminate the harmful ultraviolet wavelengths.

And lastly, an electronic shutter release is a great asset as you are hands-off the camera, preventing vibrations.

SETUP AND EXPOSURES

Once you have established your location, it's time to set up. Begin at least one hour before shooting time. Start with the tripod. Set it up so as to be able to see below the camera when the lens is pointed nearly vertically. Double check the path of the sun through the sky. Assure your camera lens combination can follow this path without any resetting of the setup. You may have to fuss with the tripod head and lens mount somewhat to make this happen. You should practice this setup well before eclipse day, so setup is straight-forward and not time consuming.

Remember, as the time passes, the sun moves through the sky at a rate of about 15 degrees per minute. Since you have a long focal length lens, the sun will pass through your field of view every few minutes. A 500 mm lens on a full frame camera has a field of view of only about 4 degrees. The sun will pass completely through the frame in about 3 minutes. So, you will be constantly chasing the sun as you photograph.

Mount your solar filter on the lens.

Set your lens to the desired focal length and the camera settings to the approximate value for the correct exposure.

Focus accurately to infinity with your lens of choice. This will rarely be at the "Infinity Mark". To establish true infinity focus, focus the camera on a far distant object with Auto Focus. Then turn AF off and fine tune the focus in live view magnifying the image as you do.

Focusing is best done in Live-View rather than through the viewfinder. Because you will be in bright, mid-day sunlight, a focusing aid such as a focusing loupe or even a dark cloth over your camera and head will be an excellent benefit.

An approximate start for exposure depends upon your focal length, sensor size and of course the solar filter density.

A trial exposure to start could be **F8 at ISO 100 and 1/500 second** to start. Make all of your images in RAW file format for best results in processing.

Your trial exposure should be made on days preceding the eclipse day at the same time so you can make tests. Bracketing exposures will give you a good idea of the sweet spot.

The last thing is to find, frame and compose your shot. It is strongly recommended to do this using Live-View. Zoom the lens to a short focal length and refine the position and composition as you zoom closer. In live view, you can always refine focus on the sun as you go. Use Live- View throughout the shoot.

For an annular eclipse, leave the solar filter on **ALL** of the time. For a total eclipse, it may be removed at totality only during that period to see and record the corona.

PROCESSING

Process all of your images in Adobe Lightroom, Camera Raw (ACR), or other similar RAW processor. Depending upon your solar filter of choice, some color modification must be made. In processing you will be able to adjust temperature and tint for appropriate color to suit your taste.

UPCOMING SOLAR ECLIPSE EVENTS IN TEXAS

Total Eclipse: Monday, April 8, 2024. Appx 12:15PM until 2:56 PM
The northeast to southwest path of totality crosses west of Austin about Fredericksburg.

SOLAR FILTERS

From B&H Web Site:

[Hoya 77mm ProND-100000 Neutral Density 5.0 Solar Filter \(16.6 Stops\)](#) \$109 (OS)

Formatt Hitech 77mm Firecrest Ultra ND 5.4 Filter (18-Stop) \$196.00

MrStarGuy Adjustable Objective White Light Solar Filter (86-117mm OD) \$49.95

[MrStarGuy Adjustable Objective White Light Solar Filter \(66-94mm OD\)](#) \$49.95

MrStarGuy 77mm Thread-in White-Light Solar Filter \$139.00

[LEE Filters 100x100mm Solar Eclipse Filter](#) \$155.00 (OS) (100MM HOLDER REQUIRED)

DayStar Filters White-Light Universal Lens Solar Filter (Single, 65-89mm OD) \$16.95 (OS)

DayStar Filters White-Light ULF Solar Combo Pack for Cameras (One Each 50mm, 70mm, 90mm) \$54.00

Thousand Oaks Optical:

Solarlite threaded Solar Filter 77mm \$59.00

OPTIONAL:

4.5 x 4.25 inch (114 x 133mm) glass Welding Hood Lens, **Shade 14** \$10.95

Available from most welding supply houses online. (DO NOT use auto darkening lens.)

NOTE: To mount the welding filter onto your lens, use two small bungee cords and hook the ends to the edges of the reversed lens hood.



Total Solar Eclipse Workshop

Texas Hill Country

Monday, April 8, 2024

This will be an exciting and fun, **FREE** workshop featuring in one day excellent opportunities for sky features that occur very rarely. If the weather behaves, this will be one of the few times when everything comes into alignment. We will photograph the Total Solar Eclipse on Monday morning April 8, 2024, from a perfect alignment position near Inks Lake State Park.

All participants will meet as a group in Burnet, Texas for breakfast no later than 8:00AM.

Crazy Gal's Café • 414 Buchanan Dr, Burnet, TX7861

To be in position in time for the 12:17 PM start of the eclipse, we will depart together from our breakfast location. Once we arrive at our shooting location, we will have a camera, setup, and technique briefing.

The Eclipse begins at 12:17 PM, reaches totality at 1:37 PM and ends at 2:58 PM.

Every effort must be made to be set and ready to photograph by 11:30 AM.

After the eclipse is over, participants will have the opportunity as a group to photograph the famous hill country wildflowers along the county roads in Burnet County.

Dinner will follow for those who wish about 7:00 PM back at Burnet, TX.

Participants should bring:

- DSLR or Mirrorless camera
- Wide angle lens of 24 to 70 mm for landscapes,
- A macro lens for wildflowers
- Lens in the 200-300 mm range (or more) for the eclipse.
- An eclipse filter for the long lens*
- Sturdy Tripod
- Intervalometer
- Plenty of batteries for four -six hours of photography (for all equipment)

As always, I am available to answer any questions or address concerns at this email or 512-743-7009.

Many thanks for your participation,

Brian Loflin

Austin Shutterbug Club Northwest Recreation Center

Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Brian Loflin. Guest Linda Youngblood (prior member) was introduced.

Brian announced that there will be a hands-on workshop on Photoshop and Lightroom Skills on Saturday, Feb 17 from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm at Northwest Recreation Center. Bring a laptop and photos to work on.

The competition assignment for March is “Bridges” and photos as usual can also be submitted in the General category. The program for April will be speaker Linda Nickell. She is a prior student of Brian’s who now has a monthly photographic video program on YouTube called “Happiness Hour”.

Future Programs include:

June 2024: Bridget Yoder, “Meaning of Place” -- photographically speaking

August 2024: Jose Madrigal, Macro Photographer, “Pollinators in Flight”

October 2024: Jennifer Lee Warner – Wildlife Conservation

Programs in 2025 includes speakers on underwater photography, “My Texas Playground”, and connecting people with Nature.

On Sunday April 7 8am, there will be a workshop on photographing people in motion during the Cap 10K

There will be an eclipse workshop on April 8 at a location to be announced

Brian did an informative presentation demonstrating photo editing in Camera Raw and Photoshop using smart layers and tools including gradients, sky selection, blending modes, image straightening, color mixer, color grading, and others.

There was a brief discussion regarding the pros and cons of the new local option in the cloud version of Lightroom.

The meeting was adjourned.



NEXT MEETING DATE!

Thursday, March 7, 2024

7:00pm

Northwest Recreation Center

2913 Northland Dr, Austin, TX 78757

Visitors welcome!

We are on Facebook!



Austin Shutterbug Competition – 2024

During the calendar year 2024, the Club will again hold bi-monthly image competitions. These will be scored during the meetings by a panel of judges. Points scored will go to an annual tally and, as such, will determine a pool of top scoring images* that will be submitted to an outside judge for annual awards. Annual Awards will include First, Second, and Third place in each of Assignment and General categories and Photographer of the Year. To be eligible for POY, any entrant must have submitted at least three top scoring entries in the Assignment category.

*Top scoring entries shall be those within the top 25 percent of scores of the annual submissions.

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORIES:

March

Bridges - Creative image of a bridge or multiple bridges or components thereof. Must be recognized as a bridge. Any process. Color or Monochrome.

May

Ruins - A man-made structure or edifice in major disrepair or state of deterioration. Any process. Monochrome only.

August

Threes - An image composed of a collection of three elements or subjects. Any process. No composites. Color or monochrome.

September

The Eyes Have It! - An image emphasizing the eye or eyes of an animal, human or not. Any process. Color only.

November

Doors and Windows - An image where the primary subject is a door(s) and/or window(s) of a building or structure. Composition is the key. Any process. Color or monochrome.

