



Does Every Picture Tell a Story?

By Val Sleger

I'm sure you've heard the expression "every picture tells a story." [Rod Stewart even sang about it.](#) What exactly does this mean? Is it a literal tale, with a beginning, middle, and end? Can you really convey a complete story in a single photograph? I set out to learn more about this interesting topic.

After reading articles and watching a few YouTube videos, I have decided that we photographers can strive to tell stories through our work, but we might not be successful if our audience doesn't "get" our photographic tale. Is that bad? Art – and photography is an art – is highly personal. We can compose and expose a beautiful image, and someone may look at it and just think, "Meh. Nothing special."

So...how do we tell stories through our photos? How do we analyze a photo, and possibly offer meaningful critiques? This article will give a few tips, and this month's presentation will touch on both topics. To tie it all together, the challenge for October will relate to both storytelling and critiques.

Storytelling Highlights

With street photography, or portrait photography, you can lean on the traditional journalistic prompts of who, what, when, where, and why. You may not be able to tell your full story in a single image. If you think of your story in a series of shots, you can look for:

- Establishing shots (Where are you? What time of year or day is it?)
- Subject shots (Who or what is the focus of your story? Will you take long shots or close-ups? How does the subject fit into your story?)
- Detail (Why is the story interesting?)

With landscape photography, your story might not be as obvious. Instead, you might lean on engaging your viewer (leading them to ask questions or think deeply about your images), and evoking emotions. Use creative compositions to support the story. Plan your shots to support the story, don't take the photo and then look for a story to "implant" into the photo after the fact. (continued on page 2)

Storytelling (continued)

There's nothing wrong with "remember shots". They help you recall beautiful places and fun activities from vacations or get-togethers with friends. Considering storytelling in your photography, however, can help you create more meaningful, interesting shots.

What about looking at someone else's work? How might you more critically review or critique a photograph? Here are a few tips to consider when actually giving a critique to a photographer about his or her work, keeping in mind to first ask if a critique is desired:

- Tell the photographer what you like about the photo. What's interesting? What is visually appealing? What caught your eye?
- Consider technique. Is the photo well-lit? Does the composition support a story? Is the subject in focus?
- Discuss any elements of the photo that you found distracting or unappealing (use gentle words).
- If invited, offer constructive ideas on how the photo can be improved.

Things to consider if critiquing work where you don't have the opportunity to have a discussion with the photographer:

- What is the subject of the image? What is the setting?
- What draws you to the image? Do you want to know more about the photo or its subject?
- Does the image suggest any themes, feelings, or ideas?
- Does the image idealize or distort the subject in any way?
- How does it measure up in terms of:
 - Composition
 - Lighting and exposure
 - Use of color
 - Angle
 - Depth of field
 - Framing
 - Background
- What did you learn from the photo that you can apply to your own photography? What ideas does it give you?

The next time you head out with your camera, give some thought to the idea of telling stories with your images, and how you can use the critique tips above to improve your own photos.

Sources: New York Times Learning Network, Roman Fox (photographer), Brenda Tharp (photographer)

Club Outing: Sunset and Blue Moon in Hereford

by Val Sleger

On August 30, 10 club members took advantage of Secretary Joyce Genske's offer to spend the evening at her home in Hereford, where she has unobstructed views of the Mule Mountains to the east, and the Huachuca Mountains to the west. Members began arriving just before sunset to extend tripods and find the perfect angles for both sunset and moonrise shots. Gathered members were excited to have the opportunity to photograph the expected Super Blue Moon.



Photo credit: Teng Go.

What exactly is a Blue Moon? What exactly is a Blue Moon? Here's what science.com has to say:

There are two types of Blue Moons but unfortunately, neither has anything to do with color. A seasonal Blue Moon is the traditional definition of a Blue Moon and refers to the third [full moon](#) in a season that has four full moons [according to NASA](#). While the second definition – borne out of a misunderstanding – is a monthly Blue Moon which refers to the

second full moon within a single calendar month. The monthly Blue Moon is nowadays considered the second definition of a Blue Moon rather than a mistake, according to [Time and Date](#).

After the moon rose high enough to disappear behind a cloud bank, members retired to Joyce's kitchen for coffee cake and chit-chat.

We may see some blue moon photos during Member Photo sharing at the September meeting. The shots I took were not blue, but here are a couple of photos from the outing.



Photo credits: Val Sleger



It's Challenge Time!

Each month, we're posting lists of terms to get you thinking about how you can make images that fit the themes posted. Some are straightforward, while others are more conceptual. Either way, having prompts can help you focus your photography and give you a reason to get out and shoot.

Below are the lists for September (current photos showcased here and at the September meeting), and October (photograph in September, and they will be showcased at the next meeting - see below – and in the October newsletter).

Please consider participating! It's a fun, no-stress way to keep up your photography skills and your eye for composition. Feel free to photograph one of each word, several of one word, or mix and match. We love seeing what everyone is working on! **Send your photos to:** azval.sleger@gmail.com. **Please submit no more than 10 photos.**

September Word List

Patterns
Movie: Mission Impossible
Gold
The letter E

October

This is a two-part challenge.

- 1) Tell a story through 3-4 photos using the establishing shot/subject/detail process
- 2) Tell a story through a single landscape photo

Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Sierra Vista Police Station Training Room, 911 Coronado, Sierra Vista. Meetings begin at 4 PM. Val Sleger will be presenting on the topics of Storytelling and Critiques at the September meeting.

Officers

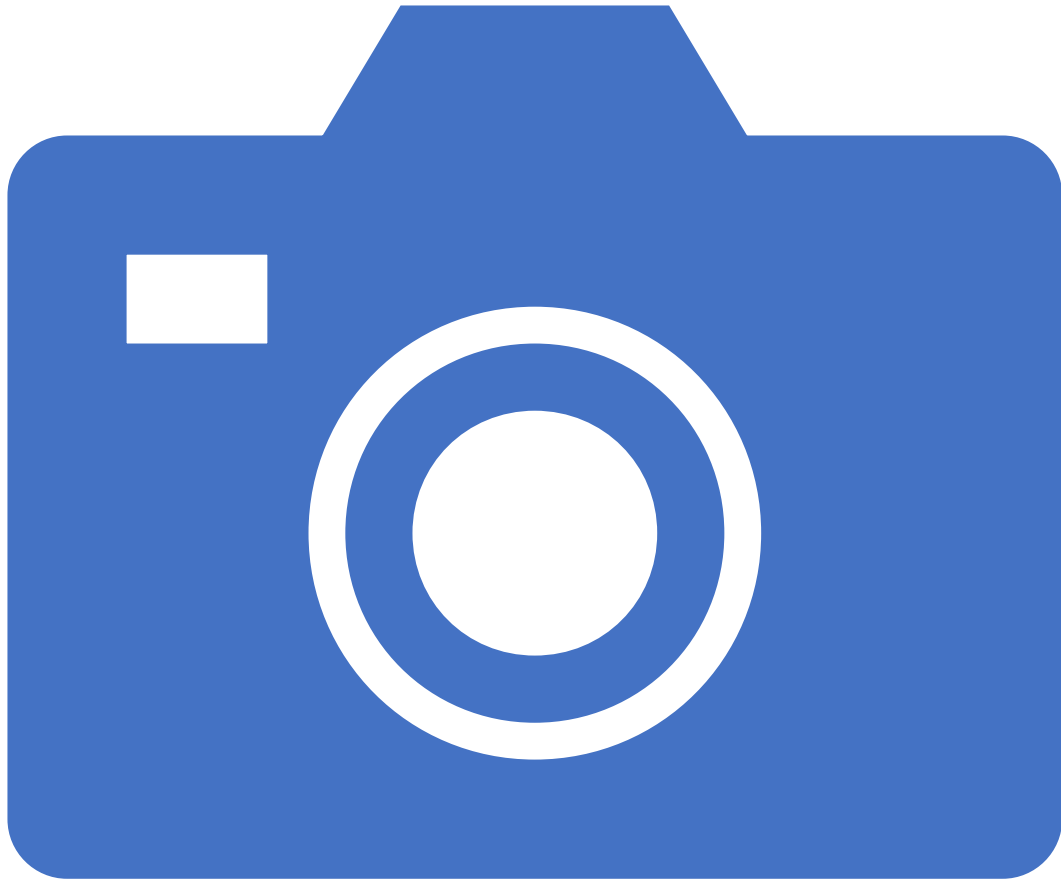
President: Mark Hanna
Vice-President & Program Coordinator: Bob Luce
Secretary: Joyce Genske
Treasurer: Francie Hills

Have an idea for a meeting topic? Let one of the officers know!

Share your Internet Finds with Us!

Here are a few resources for expanding on the idea of storytelling through photography, and photography critiques.

[Expressive Nature Photography: Find Images that Tell a Story](#)
[How to Properly Critique a Photo](#)
[How to Take Outstanding Photos that Tell a Story](#)
[How to Use Pictures to Tell a Story](#)



Member Photos

We love to see your photos – even if you aren't looking for challenge words.
We showcase them in the newsletter, and you are encouraged to bring
them to the meeting on a flash drive!

Joyce Genske sent in these photos.



Joyce Genske sent in these photos.



Challenge topic: Mission Impossible

Ava Englund sent in these photos from the August word list.



Black



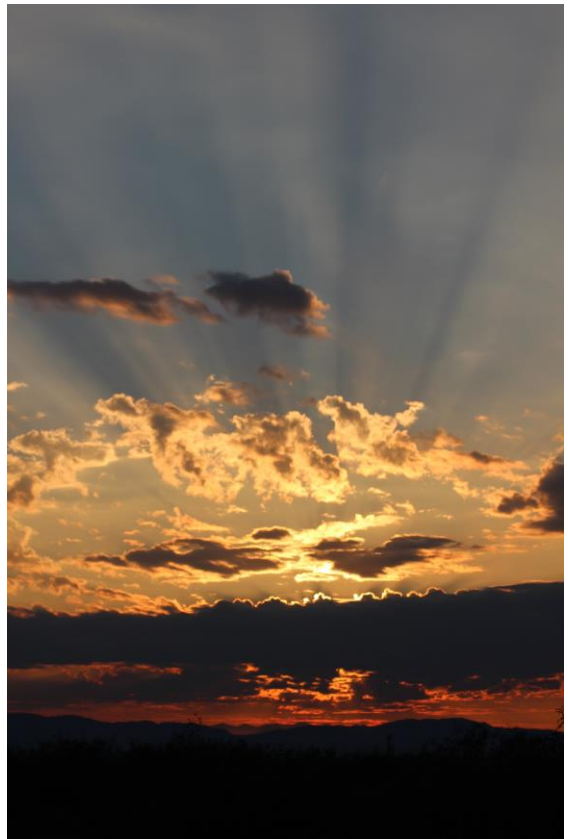
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Ava Englund sent in these images for the September Word List.



E - Eerie



E - Eternity



Gold

Ava Englund sent in these photos from the September word list.



E – Enormous Elephant Ears



E - Exhausted



Gold

Ava Englund sent in these photos from the September word list.



Gold



Mission Impossible



Mission Impossible

Ava Englund sent in these photos from the September word list.



Pattern – Mt. Lemmon Bird