

# Understanding depth-of-field

Those who have taken my classes know the importance I place on a thorough understanding of depth-of-field. And many have found that it's easier to master than they might have thought.

The aperture is the major controller of depth-of-field. To clear up those terms, some definitions are in order. Depth-of-field is the distance between the nearest point and the farthest point of a picture that appears sharp and in focus. Aperture, also known as f-stops, is the size of the lens opening through which light is allowed to pass.

A small aperture (for example f-16) will deliver far greater depth-of-field than a large aperture (say f-2). Remember, as you change apertures, a corresponding change in shutter speed is required to maintain correct exposure.

A SMALL APERTURE normally requires a faster speed. On automatic cameras, changes in aperture/shutter speed combinations are done for you. With manual cameras, it's up to you.

When do you want a great or shallow depth-of-field? In scenic shots, you most often will want a lot. You can assuredly improve that picture of the distant mountain by framing your shot with the branches of that beautiful tree in the foreground. Here you would see a smaller aperture.

Reversing the reasoning, in an outdoor portrait, for example, where the center of interest is the subject's face, a large aperture is in order. Remember, a big aperture produces narrow depth-of-field so that what

might have been a distracting background behind the subject will become instead a pleasing blur of color.

How can you determine what the depth-of-field will be? There are two ways.

First, use the depth-of-field scale on the lens barrel. The scale will appear as pairs of f-stop numbers with "bracketing" marks. When the lens is in focus, a quick check of where these numbers intersect the feet scale will tell you exactly what your depth-of-field will be and, consequently, what will appear sharp and in focus in your finished print.


DEPTH-OF-FIELD can be maximized by placing the infinity mark on the feet scale opposite your shooting aperture. Much greater depth-of-field is available if you focus in this manner enabling you to be more creative in your photography.

Second, many cameras have a depth-of-field preview control which allows you to actually see through the viewfinder what will be rendered sharp in the final picture before you snap the shutter. Consult your instruction manual to see if your camera has this useful feature.

In addition to f-stop changes, two other things affect depth-of-field. The first is subject-to-camera distance. The further you are from your subject, the greater is the depth-of-field at a given aperture. The second is the focal length of the lens you are using. The shorter the focal length (wide angle lenses), the greater the depth-of-field. The longer the focal length (telephoto lenses), the less depth-of-field.



Monte Nagler used a small aperture in order to gain as much depth-of-field as possible in this shot taken in Nevada's Great Basin National Park.



photography  
**Monte Nagler**

# Student musicians attending Congress

The 30th annual Congress of Strings which began last week at Wayne State University, will continue through Aug. 14.

The American Federation of Musicians, AFM, is sponsoring the six-week session for 62 young string players from United States and Canada. Students audition and compete for scholarships offered by AFM locals to attend the congress.

Local student winners attending include violinists: Jason Bendler, Troy; Shannon Flanigan, Rochester Hills and Judith Teasdale, Pontiac.

The cellists are Nicole Charbonneau, Bloomfield Hills and Paul Ledwon, Southfield.

In addition to orchestral rehearsals, master classes and music-related activities, the participants will present five concerts: Saturday, July 30, Hart Plaza; Saturday, Aug. 13, WSU Community Arts Auditorium; Saturday, July 30, Wednesday, Aug. 10 and Sunday, Aug. 14, Meadow Brook Festival.



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