

## FOCUS ON PHOTOGRAPHY

# Bracket shots to get right exposure



**MONTE NAGLER**

and you don't want to repeat the problem this year?

Have you ever picked up your prints from the lab only to discover to your chagrin that your shots are either too dark or too light and the perfect exposure eluded you? Or for you slide shooters, were your pictures from last year's vacation just not up to par exposurewise

Well, a negative can be reprinted and you may possibly get a good print, but why take the chance? Slide film is very unforgiving and if our exposures are off the mark, you may be out of luck!

Simple solution: Bracket your shots. Think of bracketing as "photo insurance" because you're bound to get an exposure that is perfect.

Bracketing means taking three shots of the same scene: the first at the actual meter reading, the second at one stop underexposure, and the third at one stop overexposure. You have just "bracketed"

the initial exposure to assure you'll get the ideal shot.

Bracketing can be accomplished either with the aperture control or by adjusting the shutter speed.

With slide film, I would definitely recommend bracketing as described above. With the more forgiving color negative and black and white film, a more experienced photographer need only bracket on the high side, that is, one shot at correct exposure and one shot over.

Remember, even though you won't get as many pictures out of a roll, film is still relatively inexpensive and bracketing will assure you'll get that special shot.

Another advantage of bracketing is that you'll often get an acceptable second print or slide you may be able to put to good use. Also, if a negative or slide should ever be damaged, you'll have a backup.

Bracketing your shots makes good sense both at home and when traveling. After all, you take an extra set of clothes or an extra traveler's check just in case. Think of bracketing in the same way. An extra shot or two covers you just in case.



*On guard: Bracketing his shots assured Monte Nagler a correct exposure of a special image that may not be seen much longer: the changing of the guard at Moscow's Lenin's Tomb.*

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a Touch-Tone phone, then his mailbox number, 1873. His fax number is (810) 644-1314.

## NATURE

# Beautiful bluebirds bring joy to viewers



**TIM NOWICKI**

For some reason, the color blue has been associated with sadness and hard times. Nobody wants the blues, except the blues of the bluebird and the indigo bunting. These are two blues that people enjoy having.

One of my first students in a bird study class I teach is still indebted to me for showing her the first indigo bunting she had ever seen. When the sun hits the feathers of this bird, the blue will take your breath away. The head area is darker than the body and wings. It appears that dashes of purple and royal blue were added to the indigo of the body. Males will typically sing from treetops, dead branches or wires to announce their territorial boundary. These exposed places allow the sunlight to reflect the indigo color to our eyes.

On the other hand, if you see this bird in the shadows or backlight, the bird appears black. This could be very advantageous for the male bunting because it wouldn't be very visible to a predator once it reaches the shade. As the breeding season wanes, males molt the bright indigo feathers over most of their body and take on a more female-like plumage.

Female indigo buntings incubate the eggs, they maintain a dull brown color during breeding and even during winter. Female indigo buntings look like plain, nondescript, brown, sparrow-like birds. Despite their camouflage, they cannot avoid the sharp eyes of the brown-headed cowbird. Many indigo bunting nests are parasitized by the cowbird, who lays its eggs in other birds' nests and then leaves.

Fortunately for us, both the eastern bluebird and the indigo bunting like open field areas. Buntings will be along the edge of the meadow near the forest or trees of a fence line. Females select nest sites in low bushes and shrubs near those trees where the male sings.


So if you really want the blues, go to a meadow on a bright, sunny day and look for the indigo blue of the bunting, the intense powder blue of the bluebird and the blue of the sky. You'll walk away feeling GREAT!

Tim Nowicki lives in Livonia and works as a naturalist with Independence Oaks County Park in Oakland County. To reach him by voice mail, call (313) 953-2047, and then his extension, 1874.



*Go blue! The indigo bunting has a blue color that will take your breath away.*

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