

MARCH GUEST SPEAKER — JAY PATEL

The guest speaker for the March, 2011 meeting was LPS member and 2010 LPS President Jay Patel. Jay spoke on his photographic technique in travel photography, centering on a recent trip to the U. S. Southwest, to various areas of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and northern Arizona. His travels included Canyonlands, Arches and Bryce Canyon National Parks, White Sands National Monument, Rattlesnake and Sheepshead Canyons, Monument Valley, and numerous other familiar southwestern desert and mountain venues.

He is primarily self-taught in photography, having learned much through trial and error, but some of his most valuable experience has come through Canon workshops. At one such seminar, he learned high dynamic range (HDR), a technique that was valuable in recent travels. Jay finds it helpful to record time and place for each of his photos, both for personal memories as well as for later presentations.

Jay uses several different types of receptacles for carrying his gear. Although he drove on his recent trip, when he flies he prefers a suitcase-like hard case carry-on, sufficient to hold at least two SLRs and two zoom lenses. For expeditions involving longer hikes, he prefers a backpack with good support and pockets for water bottles. For shorter hikes, he has a smaller pack, and for nearly all of his landscape photos, he utilizes a tripod. For his recent trip, he used a 4-wheel drive vehicle for back roads. He checked road conditions in advance with park rangers, and carried at least a 2-day supply of food and water, with hiking shoes and with blankets and warm clothing for below-freezing nighttime temperatures, even in May. For remote areas with few recognizable landmarks, he relied on both a compass and a global positioning system (GPS) receiver.

Weather conditions were a big factor on his trip, the most serious being sandstorms, in which fine-grained sand infiltrated his cameras. One of his cameras required emergency, on-site jury-rigged repair. He recommended carrying lens-cleaning paper, a dust-off pressurized air canister and specialized sensor-cleaning equipment for such conditions. He utilized a Navajo guide in Sheepshead and Rattlesnake Canyons, which was helpful for locating landmarks and photographing at ideal times of day. 80% of his photographs were taken using HDR techniques.

Jay concluded with a comprehensive and painstakingly prepared slide presentation of the most notable of the images captured during his travels.

By Bob Connell